

**ENTERTAINMENT / A2-I**

The Gils are alive ... and starring in Cinemalaya 2006 entries

**BUSINESS / BI**

GMA extends SPV law by 2 years

**NEWS / A11**

RP's 1st integrated ethanol plant to rise in Negros Oriental

**WORLD / A22**

Tape mocks US failure to capture Osama bin Laden

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**Top DepEd exec fires parting shot at GMA**

By Alquin Papa

**IN A PARTING BLAST AT PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO, former Education Undersecretary Juan Miguel "Mike" Luz has accused her administration of focusing on political expediency and placing little value on genuine education reforms.**

Luz spelled out his grievances in a three-page resignation letter to Ms Arroyo dated April 19.

TOP DEPED / A4

Tuesday, April 25, 2006 ★ 4 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 136 P1B website: [www.inq7.net](http://www.inq7.net)

**UK women prefer cleaning house to sex, says survey**

**LONDON—THE GOOD news for lazy British men is that women find domestic chores "mentally therapeutic"—the bad news is that many prefer house cleaning to making love, according to details of a survey published Monday.**



UK WOMEN / A10

# Lifting of VAT on oil seen

**El Shaddai leader steps into Palace, Senate row**

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

**THE LEADER OF EL SHADDAI yesterday called on President Macapagal-Arroyo and the Senate to resolve new differences prompted by the Supreme Court decision upholding the right of Congress to call officials to hearings in aid of legislation.**

"I think most Filipinos now are of the desire that the executive and the legislative branches of our government should really come together to work things out," said Bro. Mariano "Mike" Velarde in an interview with the INQUIRER.

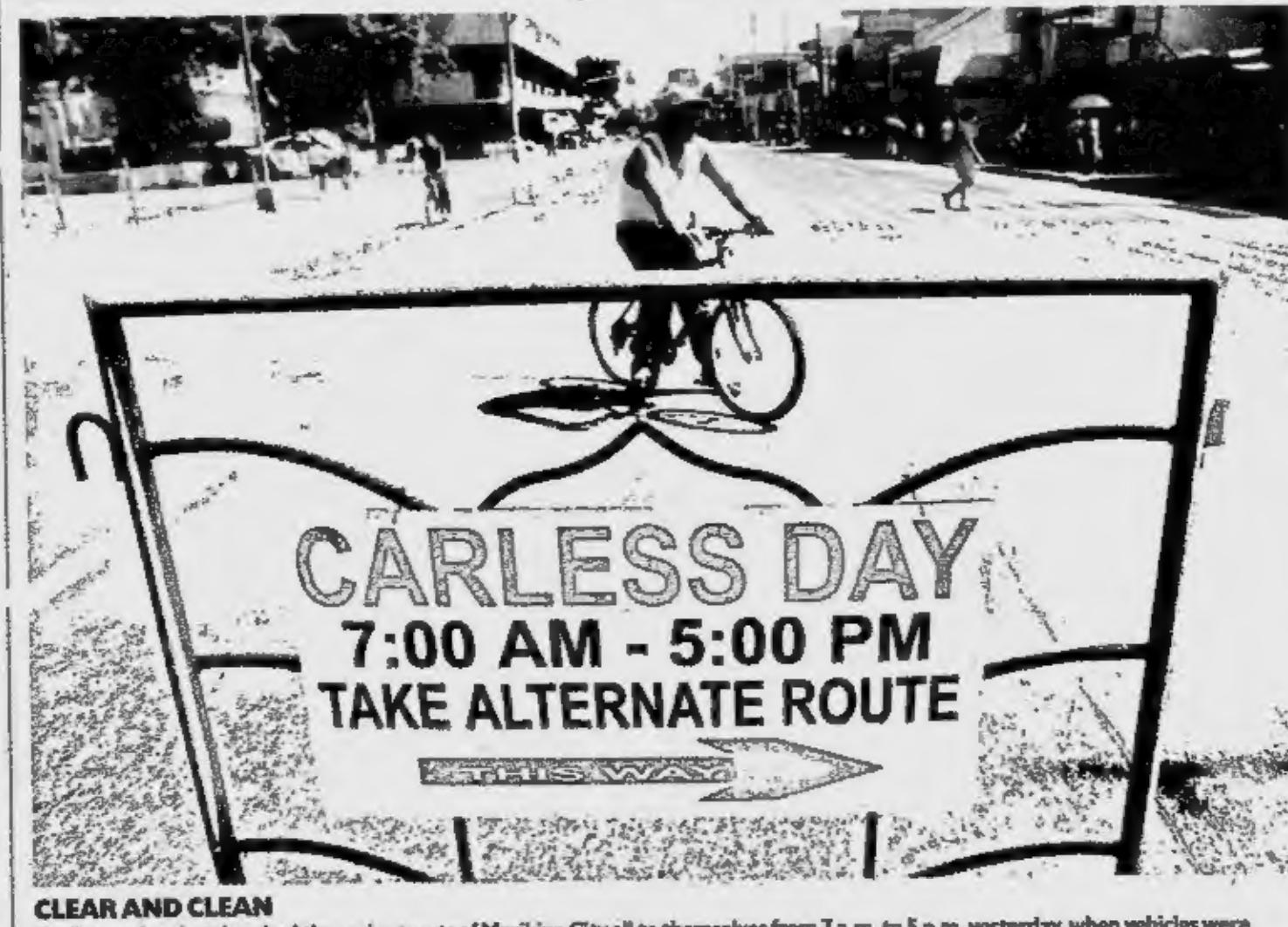
"It's time to reach out. This war of words is not helping, not doing us any good," said the leader of the five-million-strong Catholic charismatic group and spiritual adviser to Ms Arroyo.

Velarde warned an escalation of the war of words between the Palace and its critics could be disastrous.

"They should not underestimate what people are thinking today," said Velarde, who has been trying to mediate differences between Ms Arroyo and her political opponents, including ousted President Joseph Estrada.

He said the Supreme Court decision last week was a boost to democracy. He advised Palace officials to respect the ruling.

Velarde also appealed to the senators not to abuse their prerogative.



## 6 solons, Gringo charged with rebellion

By Leila B. Salaverria and Tarra V. Quismundo

Arroyo.

The sweeping indictment appeared to have spared few among known dissident leaders, lumping together strange bedfellows—from ex-Sen. Gregorio Honasan and Magdalo soldiers, to Communist Party founder Jose Ma. Sison and spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, and National Democratic Front leader Luis Jalandoni.

The alleged plot to topple Ms Arroyo was supposed to include an attack on Malacañang.

All were charged with a capital offense punishable by life imprisonment.

The six congressmen charged were party-list Representatives Satur Ocampo, Teodoro Casinio and Joel Virador of Bayan Muna, Crispin Beltran and Rafael Mariano of Anakpawis, and Liza Maza

of Gabriela.

The charges were actually filed late on Friday but the DOJ did not announce their action until yesterday. The complaint listed several John Does.

The lawmakers immediately denounced the haste with which the Department of Justice prosecution team filed the charges.

"We vehemently protest and

6 SOLONS / A6

SAYING THEIR PARTY-LIST groups were communist fronts, state prosecutors yesterday filed rebellion charges in court against six congressmen, along with a former senator and 41 other people, for allegedly hatching an "intricate web" of conspiracies to overthrow President Macapagal-

## UP chancellor to graduates: We didn't teach you to be exported

By DJ Yap Metro

**MEMBERS OF GRADUATING Class 2006 of the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City, may have proven themselves to be of "export-quality," worthy of employment anywhere in the First World.**

But their chancellor has a gentle, somewhat stern, reminder for them: "Wherever you go, remember that we did not teach you just to be exported."

"If you're not going to be part of the solution to the country's woes, then please do not become part of the problem," said Chancellor Sergio Cao, addressing almost 4,000 graduates during the premier state university's 95th commencement exercises on Sunday.

The new graduates should use their skills and talents where they are most needed—right here in their own country—rather than search for greener pastures and fatter paychecks elsewhere, according to Cao.

In a four-hour ceremony, accompanied by the UP Symphonic Orchestra, the graduates were formally bestowed their degrees at the Amphitheater.

This year's batch had a total of 3,963 graduating students. Diliman, the largest among the units in the UP System, has 15 colleges, four institutes and four schools, two centers and one program.

Of the total number of graduates, 3,177 received baccalaureate degrees, 717 masteral de-

UP CHANCELLOR / A8

"The executive will meet with the energy committees and ways and means committees of both chambers to discuss the various options in alleviating the impact of higher oil prices," said Defensor in an interview with reporters.

The government imposed a 10-percent VAT on previously exempted items, like petroleum products, electricity and medical and legal services on Nov. 1 to help address the fiscal deficit. It raised the rate to 12 percent on Feb. 1.

The idea of exempting petroleum products from the VAT has received bipartisan support from members of the House of Representatives.

A total of 146 of the 236-member chamber had already signed a resolution seeking to suspend the VAT on petroleum products,

LIFTING A6



THE REMAINS of former beauty queen, actress and TV host Chat Silayan lie at the Santuario de San Antonio in Forbes Park.

## Former beauty queen Chat Silayan dies; 46

By Marinel R. Cruz Entertainment

**SHE WAS ONLY 46. MA. Rosario "Chat" Silayan—1980 Miss Universe third runner-up, actress and, most recently, TV host—died Sunday night after a two-year bout with colon cancer.**

Only family and close friends had known she was sick.

"Chat kept her illness a secret to avoid a media circus. Also, she didn't want the public

to see her in such a state," said Rene Salud, her fashion designer, friend and mentor.

Salud said even he didn't know Silayan had fallen ill until a year after the cancer was diagnosed.

"It came to me as a great shock," he told the INQUIRER in a phone interview yesterday. "I wished I could do something to help her."

Silayan died at around 8 p.m. at St. Luke's Medical Center.

EX-BEAUTY / A9

## Junior Inquirer Unicef Hall of Fame awardee

By Ruth L. Navarra

**THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER again scored a grand slam at the Unicef-Philippine Press Institute's Child-Friendly Newspaper and Journalist Awards.**

On Sunday night, it won four awards:

- The Philippine Daily Inquirer was named for the fourth time the Child-Friendly Newspaper of the Year (national broadsheet category).

- For the fifth consecutive year, the Junior Inquirer won the

Outstanding Children's Newspaper/Section award.

- Because of its feat, the Junior Inquirer was elevated to the Awards' Hall of Fame.

- Inquirer columnist Michael Tan received the award for Outstanding Column on Children for "Kids behind bars," published on Aug. 12, 2005, in his column "Pinoy Kasi."

Madonna T. Virola, the Inquirer's correspondent for Mindoro, also received a similar award for "Pagingin ng sikolohiya sa gifted

JUNIOR / A9



Inquirer publisher Isagani Yambot (center) and Junior Inquirer's Ruth Navarra (left) and Dianne Vilafuerte show off the Unicef-PPI awards.

FORECAST: Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rain showers and isolated thunderstorms becoming frequent rains over Southern Mindanao. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rain showers or thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening.

COMPILED BY KATE FEDERICO, PDI RESEARCH/04/24/04

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# Labor walkouts, pickets begin today

By Jerome Aning and Dona Z. Pazzibugan

**LABOR GROUPS PLAN TO STAGE NATIONWIDE** walkouts, pickets and other forms of protests today at the start of pre-Labor Day activities to push for higher wages in anticipation of the "domino effect" of rising oil prices on basic commodities.

Kilusang Mayo Uno chair Elmer Labog said factory workers from around 50 companies in Pasig City, Valenzuela City and other areas in Metro Manila and nearby industrial belts will join the protests.

He said workers at Manila's North Harbor will also stop working for two hours while urban poor groups from various communities will conduct local assemblies.

Workers from Central and

Southern Luzon industrial enclaves as well as cities in Bicol, Cebu, Panay and Mindanao will also hold factory-based protests and picket offices of the Department of Labor, Labog said.

"Ordinary Filipino workers and consumers cannot absorb the domino effect of the surging prices of local petroleum products," he said at a forum in Manila's Philippine Christian University. "Oil companies and businesses are expected to pass on the high

oil prices to consumers in the form of additional market prices of almost all consumer goods."

He noted that the minimum wage in Metro Manila was still pegged at P275, far below the estimated P690 daily cost of living for a family of six.

"Our demand for P125 across-the-board, across-the-county wage hike is therefore very justified at this time," Labog added.

Also yesterday, the Alliance of Progressive Labor warned Malacañang against suppressing planned May Day activities.

"We will hold the traditional Labor Day march and any untoward violence will not come from the workers' line," said Jesus Mata, API secretary general.

Mata was reacting to Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor's warning that the govern-

ment would not hesitate to re-impose a state of emergency should the May 1 rallies turn violent.

"It's a lame excuse to prevent massive protests on May 1, that the workers will undoubtedly use as the most opportune time to call for President Macapagal-Arroyo's resignation and present anti-Charter change sentiments," Mata said.

API spokesperson Prestoline Suyat allayed fears that the May 1 protests would be violent.

"You won't make trouble in your own birthday celebration," he said. "Malacañang is just fooling the people in saying that the Labor Day protests would be violent."

"We are warning Malacañang against disrupting the workers' celebration of May 1 as they did in the dispersal of the women's march last March 8," said Mata.

Meanwhile, a military

spokesperson said yesterday that all units had been placed on alert to prevent rogue soldiers from using the May Day rallies to mount another attempt to topple Ms Arroyo.

Citing an alleged plot by military and communist rebels dubbed "Oplan 4G," a spokesperson said military units had been told to prepare for any "eventualities" during the May Day observance.

"Oplan 4G" was mentioned in documents the military claims to have recovered from escaped Oakwood mutineer Army Lt. Lawrence San Juan when he was re-captured last Feb. 21.

The documents supposedly call for organizing anti-Arroyo rallies with 200,000 to 500,000 participants culminating on May 1 when an armed component would join the rallies.

"The Chief of Staff has directed

all units to remain vigilant and to prepare for that. We have to make sure the AFP is prepared for any eventuality for May 1 based on the plan stated in the document," said Lt. Commodore Earl Pabal-an, deputy chief of the AFP's public information office.

"These are not preparations against civilians or groups that will stage mass actions. This is to ensure those who are not part of mass actions will freely go through their activities," he said.

At the same time, however, he downplayed the capability of rebel troops to mount a coup.

"We are confident those who planned to withdraw support have already been identified. As far as the AFP is concerned, we would not experience another [scenario] similar to that last Feb. 24," Pabal-an said. With Jerald Uy

## Job fairs to mark gov't Labor Day celebration

By Jerome Aning

**THE GOVERNMENT WILL MARK** Labor Day next week with a series of "mega job fairs" offering 30,000 local and overseas employment opportunities for fresh graduates and the jobless, the labor department has announced.

About 100 local employers and 50 licensed recruiters will participate in the main fair that organizer Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP) will host at the Quezon City Hall covered walk on May 1, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

However, the militant labor group Kilusang Mayo Uno scoffed at the job fairs, calling the activity "government propaganda than a serious attempt to solve joblessness."

KMU national chair Elmer Labog questioned the quality of jobs offered in the fairs, claiming that they did not solve the country's unemployment problem and could even worsen underemployment.

"Many jobs offered in these fairs are contractual. Worse, those who go often end up taking jobs unrelated to their college courses or training because the jobs they're looking for are often unavailable in the fair," Labog told reporters in an interview.

"And because jobs are unavailable here, the unemployed look for jobs abroad. In fact, those who are still studying want to work abroad, leading to the further depletion of our skilled workers," he added.

Labog said the best generator of jobs in the country was still agriculture and this could only be realized if the government fully implemented its land reform program in favor of the peasants.

Labor Undersecretary for Employment Danilo Cruz, chair of the department's Labor Day Steering Committee, disagreed with Labog saying that the jobs offered in the fair are "productive"

and would benefit all kinds of job seekers, be they fresh graduates, out-of-school youths, skilled workers and disadvantaged persons.

Registration at the TUCP job fair is free. Job seekers will be given a chance to undergo jobs and skills matching through the government's Computerized National Manpower Registry System.

Phil-Jobnet, the department's online job-finding system, along with the so-called "rolling stores" of the National Food Authority, will also be set up in the fair.

Other job fairs will be held next week in Baguio, San Fernando in La Union, Tuguegarao, San Pablo City, Calintaan in Occidental Mindoro, Lobo in Camarines Norte, Libon, Albay, Bacolod, Tacloban, Butuan, Zamboanga, Cagayan de Oro, Davao, General Santos in South Cotabato, Koronadal and Tacurong in Sultan Kudarat and Kidapawan in North Cotabato.

## Militants press claim of military harassment

By Luige A. del Puerto

**MILITANTS PRESSED THEIR ATTACK** against the military yesterday, saying documents they had obtained showed that left-leaning organizations would be listed in the military's "Order of Battle."

The documents clearly showed that sectoral organizations were to be monitored and cased, according to the Kilusang Magbukid ng Pilipinas, one of the critics of the military.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines has dismissed the KMP's claims, saying many such documents had cropped up in the past but they were not from the military.

The KMP provided the Inquirer copies of the documents, one of which was titled "Institutionalizing the Conduct of Target Research as a Major Component in the Intelligence Project Preparation in Particular, and Intelligence Cycle Process, in General."

The paper recommended the conduct of "extensive research" on "sectoral and NDF (National Democratic Front) front organizations."

"This effort is a shift from the traditional area study that was being undertaken for three decades but never produced a major impact in the AFP's counterinsurgency opera-

tions," the document stated.

"The output of the target research on a sector will be subjected to a sectoral/front organization Order of Battle (OB) validation ...," it added.

The KMP and groups under the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan have been labeled by the military as allies and legal fronts of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

The paper also said a "case build-up" would be part of the research "targeting personalities and sectoral organization(s) supporting the CPP/NPA/NDF and/or personalities within these sectoral/front organizations."

"This proves beyond doubt that it is the AFP that is behind the close monitoring, surveillance and ... killings of political activists critical of the Macapagal-Arroyo administration," the KMP said.

Military spokesperson Brig. Gen. Jose Angel Honrado challenged the militants to produce the documents to verify their authenticity.

He said the military had a strategy to counter the communist threat but it did not include above-ground organizations.

"It is not government policy (to) direct the AFP or the PNP to harass (or) intimidate legal organizations. It is not government policy to repress them," he had said.

## Cha-cha 'cover' for GMA cheating in polls—Guingona

By Jerome Aning

**FORMER VICE PRESIDENT TEOFISTO** Guingona Jr. yesterday renewed calls for President Macapagal-Arroyo to resign and for her administration to stop pushing for Charter change.

Speaking in a forum organized by the Kilusang Mayo Uno at Manila's Philippine Christian University, Guingona also stressed the need for Filipinos to be united in battling corruption and exposing anomalies in the government.

"We should have more fire to fight the forces of evil so that the Philippines can be free and independent once again," he said, warning that Filipinos might be beaten by the Nepalese, who are also staging pro-democracy protests against their king.

The former Vice President called Cha-cha the "biggest cover-up" for Ms Arroyo's cheating in the 2004 election as well as the scandals plaguing her administration.

"If Cha-cha is successful, all the scandals involving Ms Arroyo would be forgotten, because there will be a new government with her as president and prime minister; there will no longer be any impeachment," he said.

He also criticized the ongoing people's initiative for Cha-cha, citing examples of how people in the provinces were deceived into signing the

petition to amend the Constitution.

"Let us not debate on which is better—presidential or parliamentary form of government," Guingona said. "That's not the issue; the issue is the process with which it is being pushed, through manipulation of the people's initiative."

He added: "We should redouble our opposition against Cha-cha. We will campaign, we will fight, we will do everything in order that Cha-cha will not succeed."

Guingona warned that any cover-up would prove to be the perpetrator's undoing. He recalled the case of former US President Richard Nixon who was forced to resign in the '70s after trying to cover up the burglary at the Democratic Party offices in the Watergate building.

The burglary was traced to the White House and Nixon, to avoid an impeachment trial, opted to resign. He said Nixon's act contradicted that of Ms Arroyo's who remains in Malacañang despite the pieces of evidence presented by the opposition to prove her alleged involvement in election cheating and other anomalies such as the fertilizer fund, the NorthRail project and Venerable contract scandals.

Guingona recalled that Nixon used money to silence the Watergate controversy but the truth eventually came out. With Jerald Uy

## Saudi cops free 14 Pinoys

By Volt Contreras

**SAUDI POLICE HAVE STARTED RELEASING** several Filipinos arrested over the past three weeks in connection with the discovery of body parts and the disappearance of three other Filipinos in Jeddah.

The Department of Foreign Affairs yesterday said at least 14 detainees had been freed out of the 52 Filipinos who were rounded up, following the "confession" of seven suspects last week.

The release came days after the DFA summoned Saudi Ambassador to Manila Mohammed Ameen Mohammed Wali over human rights concerns and the "incommunicado" status of the detainees which prevented Philippine consular officials from immediately coming to their aid.

The 14 ex-detainees had been handed over

to either their employers or sponsors, the department said, citing a report from the Philippine consulate in Jeddah.

Seven Filipinos had admitted to killing three of their compatriots, whose bodies were feared to be those found dismembered and dumped in garbage bags south of Jeddah on April 4.

Saudi police, who have yet to file formal charges, told the consulate last week that "rivalry" over illegal lottery operations could have triggered the brutal killings.

This angle emerged after one of the seven suspects and one of the three victims were both found to have run lotteries "in competition."

With the DFA still reluctant to disclose the identities of the suspects and the victims, an INQUIRER source in Jeddah revealed that the warring lottery operators—or at least the financiers—were Filipinos who were from Pampanga.

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# Imelda wants foundation to benefit from deal

By Alcuin Papa

FORMER FIRST LADY IMELDA MARCOS wants a foundation of her choice to receive part of the proceeds of any compromise agreement her family may enter into with the Presidential Commission on Good Government on the Marcos wealth.

PCGG Commissioner Ricardo Abcede said this was the condition set by Marcos for a deal. An "influential representative" of Marcos acting as negotiator had transmitted the message to Abcede.

"The representative said part of the wealth would go to a foundation that they would designate," Abcede said.

The PCGG commissioner said he started "exploratory talks" with the unnamed representative Thursday night for a possible settlement on the Marcos wealth, estimated at between \$5 and \$10 billion.

By law, all recovered Marcos wealth was supposed to go to the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP). But after 2008, he said the proceeds should go directly to the national treasury.

Abcede said the PCGG would have to investigate the foundation picked by Marcos to receive the proceeds.

"I am not saying that we will [allot the proceeds to a foundation]. In the first place, we have to examine if [the condition] is legal because there is a law that all proceeds of the PCGG should go to CARP," he said.

An allotment to a foundation would be possible only through legislation by Congress, Abcede said.

He added that he was confident a compromise on the Marcos wealth could be drafted and approved by the courts this year.

Former PCGG chair Jovito Salonga said a deal with the Marcoses would have "shameful implications" and asked President Macapagal-Arroyo to stop the PCGG from negotiating with the Marcos family, as well as with businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco.

In a statement released to the media yesterday, Salonga reminded the PCGG of the December 1998 Supreme Court decision penned by now Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban declaring the compromise deal at that time between the government and the Marcoses illegal.

By Philip C. Tubeza and Leila B. Salaverria

TO ENSURE THAT HEINOUS CRIME VICTIMS GET justice even if the death penalty is abolished, a ranking House leader yesterday said Congress was considering a harsher form of life sentence—at least 40 years at hard labor for convicts before they could be considered for parole.

House Deputy Majority Leader Eduardo Gullas said Congress was considering the proposal that a person convicted of a heinous crime be incarcerated for "the rest of his natural life"—a minimum of 40 years, or until he reaches the age of 70—before becoming eligible for parole.

He said the harsher form of life sentence, known as "qualified reclusion perpetua," would require 40 years in captivity "with productive hard labor and absolutely no allowances for good behavior."

"This means the [heinous crime] convict must reach 70 [years] or spend a minimum of 40 years in prison, excluding time served before conviction, or

even if he shows meritorious demeanor," Gullas said.

At present, a "life term" would become eligible for parole after serving only one-half of the prison term, or after 15 to 20 years, he said.

The convict was also entitled to good conduct or loyalty credits, as well as a reduction in sentence for preventive detention, or jail time served prior to conviction, he added.

Gullas said this meant that with exemplary behavior, a "life term" could qualify to get out of prison after serving less than 15 years.

Under the new proposal, convicts sentenced to "qualified reclusion perpetua" would not get good behavior allowances and a reduction in sentence for preventive detention, he said.

Gullas added that there would also be an "accessory penalty" requiring heinous crime convicts to provide full compensation to their victims or their families.

The proposal is expected to be discussed once the House begins debates on the repeal of the Death

Penalty Law when Congress resumes sessions in mid-May.

The anticrime group Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption, meanwhile, shifted the battle for the implementation of the Death Penalty Law to the legislative branch after President Macapagal-Arroyo commuted all death sentences.

VACC chair Dante Jimenez said the group's members would meet with lawmakers to convince them not to review or repeal Republic Act No. 7659 or the Death Penalty Law as there were more pressing matters to tackle.

"We will appeal to their conscience that it is not the time to repeal RA 7659. There is no urgency to repeal the law. They can review that some other day," Jimenez said yesterday at the Kapitan sa Manila forum.

He added that the House of Representatives should focus on laws that deal with the economy, employment and the oil price increase.

Jimenez also said VACC's lawyers were studying whether or not to file a suit against the President for her decision.

Although the President has the power to commute death sentences, he said, this should be done on a case-to-case basis.

"It should not be [done] wholesale. The family of the victim has the right to know how the sentence was commuted," Jimenez said.

## Pinoys to attend meet on disabled

A FIVE-MEMBER DELEGATION FROM THE Philippines will attend the VSA arts International Conference in Washington, D.C. on June 9-10. The conference is a gathering of professionals in the arts, education and disability fields.

VSA arts International was founded by Jean Kennedy Smith, a sister of President John F. Kennedy, in 1974. It has 80 organization-affiliates worldwide, including VSA arts Philippines Inc.

VSA arts Philippines promotes music, dra-

ma, dancing, saori weaving and creative writing, especially among disabled children and adults. It is affiliated with the Kennedy Center in the US capital.

Its executive director Rebecca M. Santos will lead the Philippine delegation with communications coordinator Ofelia Silang, community advocate Rizalinda Sanchez, craft artist Ma. Luisa Paje Luengco and Adelaida B. Reyes from the Department of Education's Special Education Supervision.

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# Ombudsman: 56 execs sanctioned

By Nelson F. Flores

TWENTY-THREE ERRING GOVERNMENT officials have been dismissed from the service and 33 others suspended since January last year, for a total of 56 executives sanctioned for corruption, according to Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez.

Gutierrez made the announcement yesterday in reaction to a recent speech by US Ambassador Kristie Kenney before the local American Chamber of Commerce where the envoy asserted that corruption was one of the things hindering economic development in the Philippines.

## Role of corruption

Kenney said that while the country's growth rate looked good, "compared to some of the dynamic, fast-moving economies in Asia, the Philippines is



GUTIERREZ

not where it ought to be."

"Corruption plays a role in this, as do issues such as intellectual property rights," she had said.

Gutierrez said that among those dismissed from the government service are an internal revenue commissioner, a customs deputy commissioner, a port manager and a public works undersecretary.

## 50 being prosecuted

In addition, she said, her office was currently prosecuting 50 ranking government personnel, including several military officers, before the Sandiganbayan antigrift court.

"Because of the reforms being implemented at the Office of the Ombudsman, there has been a steady increase in the conviction rate for cases that went to trial, from 13 percent in 2003 to 33 percent in 2005," Gutierrez said.

## Ex-health secretary

Ombudsman records showed that among those convicted by the Sandi-

ganbayan in 2005 were a former health secretary, a governor, several mayors and directors of national government offices.

## Recent reforms

Among the reforms recently undertaken by the Office of the Ombudsman was the Pursuing Reforms through Integrity Development program, which assesses government agencies' levels of corruption resistance and develops and implements corruption prevention measures. The program is a joint project of the Ombudsman and the Department of Budget and Management.

Gutierrez said the "Office of the Ombudsman is consistent in its commitment to rid the government of corrupt officials by prosecuting those involved in corrupt practices and by initiating reforms to ensure a speedy and fair disposition of cases."

Years in jail 'spiritually enriching,' says Estrada

By Nelson F. Flores

FORMER PRESIDENT JOSEPH ESTRADA marks today his fifth year in detention while undergoing trial for plunder and perjury in the Sandiganbayan.

In a statement he issued yesterday, Estrada said his five-year incarceration was a "spiritually enriching experience." He said it had taught him how to forgive.

"It was during these five years that I learned what true forgiveness means. I found out that it is when you completely forgive and pray for those who have wronged you that you find spiritual fulfillment," Estrada said.

Estrada admitted he was initially embittered by his ouster and kept asking God why this had to happen to him. He said he found the answers in the Bible and he has been praying since.

"I have been praying for all of them, and always remember to pray for the late cardinal, Jaime Sin, as well as the bishops. I know that through prayers, they who wronged me will be enlightened, as I hope and pray that the Arroyo administration will be enlightened and set the Filipino people free, through the truth that cannot be hidden."

Estrada said he had forgiven those who played a part in his ouster from Malacañang like Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes, former Vice President Teofisto Guingona, former Defense Secretary Orlando Mercado, Sen. Manuel Villar, former Quezon Rep. Wigberto Tafida, Senate President Franklin Drilon and former Sen. Loren Legarda.

"I've forgiven them. I am a Christian. I read the Bible three times a week," Estrada said.

Estrada's statement came in the wake of Novaliches Bishop Antonio Tobias's unexpected apology for the role of Church leaders in EDSA II last Wednesday during a Mass to celebrate the former President's 59th birthday.

"I hope you can forgive the Catholic Church for what happened to you," Tobias had said, obviously referring to the major role Sin had played in the 2001 EDSA II revolt that drove Estrada from Malacañang.

"There is no rancor within me. So many who have worked for my removal then have come to visit me, and they know that there is no enmity between them and myself. That is how I know now that the five years in detention have become a sacrifice that I willingly embraced, for my own good and the good of the nation," Estrada said.

## Customs digitizes documents as safeguard

THE BUREAU OF CUSTOMS HAS STARTED to put its documents in "electronic form" to safeguard them from loss in the hands of unscrupulous personnel and the forces of nature—rats, termites, floods—that are often blamed for the destruction or disappearance of records.

Operatives of the bureau's Run After Smugglers (RATS) program came up with the measure in view of the increasing number of smuggling cases dismissed by the Department of Justice and the courts because of the failure of customs officials to produce genuine documents as evidence.

"We are determined to have none of our smuggling cases dismissed on technicality," Customs Commissioner Napoleon L. Morales said at a press briefing after RATS operatives filed their 14th smuggling case last Thursday.

DOJ's Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zufa complained earlier that many smuggling cases had been dismissed because they were only backed by photocopied evidence, with customs personnel saying that they could not produce the original records because they had been either lost, eaten by termites and rats, or destroyed by floods.

Reynaldo Umali, director of both the customs' legal service and RATS, said they have devised a records management system and are now putting the documents in digital form.

"These are admissible as evidence in court," he said of the digitized form, which carry codes for easy tracking. In addition, the bureau also maintains a "manual record system" to safeguard the original documents.

Armand N. Nocum

## Correction

IN THE APRIL 23 ISSUE, a caption on Page A13 misstated the occupation of the person standing beside President Macapagal-Arroyo and Tessa Prieto-Valdez at the Tubbataha Reef Marine Park. Gigi Santos is a dive instructor—not a dive master.

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Claro Rojas Avenue corner Mascarado Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: [daydesk@inquirer.com.ph](mailto:daydesk@inquirer.com.ph).

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# 7 killed, over 50 hurt as bus plunges into ravine

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.  
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

PAGBILAO, QUEZON—AT LEAST seven people were killed and more than 50 others injured when a speeding Manila-bound bus drove off a sharp curve and plunged into a 30-meter ravine here before dawn yesterday.

"We were traveling downward too fast. The driver probably thought that he was driving on a straight road so when we reached the sharp curve, he could no longer control the bus," said Raquel Alban, 21, a resident of Naga City.

Alban was in the front seat of the RJ Transit bus, which had come from Bicol, when the vehicle fell off the zigzag diversion road of the Maharlika Highway in Sitio Upper Sapinit, Barangay Silangang Malibcoy, at around 2:30 a.m. She escaped with only a few bruises.

At least seven persons, apparently including the driver, were killed, and their bodies were taken to Fueraria Pagbilao in Lucena City.

More than 50 injured passengers were rushed to the Jane County Hospital in Pagbilao town.

Supt. Joselito Conti, Pagbilao police chief, identified the fatalities as Eduardo Onan of Rosario, Pasig City; Victor Argones of Tigaon, Ca-



RESCUE workers haul an injured passenger of the Manila-bound bus up the 30-meter ravine into which it tumbled in Pagbilao, Quezon, early Monday.

DELFIN T. MALLARI JR./PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

marines Sur; Kaila Marie Argones, 5, and Jovie Enterino, 24.

Conti said passengers had pointed to Argones as the bus driver. It was not immediately clear if he and the girl were related.

Four of the victims were pinned to death by steel bars and iron sheets in the wreckage of the bus as it lay on its left side at the bottom of the ravine.

Rescue groups, police and soldiers lowered several acetylene tanks to

the crash site to free the bodies.

Police said the bus was descending the diversion road bypassing the Pagbilao town proper when the driver lost control of the vehicle at the curve. The road had no steel railings.

Alban said she was awake when the accident happened.

"I lost count of how many times the bus tumbled ... as it rolled down the cliff. After it settled below, I only heard painful cries of

help from the other passengers," she said, still visibly shaken as she sipped water in a hut nearby.

"I was afraid that the bus would explode, so I rushed to get out of the bus," she said, adding that policemen arrived at the scene a few minutes after she had climbed up to the road.

Conti said police were alerted to the accident by motorists and that he, in turn, called in the rescue team of the Mirante power

company which had the necessary equipment.

"I don't know how many times I climbed up and down the cliff to help bring the survivors to safety at the top," said Alex Orig, a member of the rescue team.

Eden de Quirro, a resident of Lagunoy, said she tightly embraced her young son as the bus plummetted.

"He does not have any bruises, except for a little swollen part on his head. But he's all right. He was saved by his guardian angel," she said, still hugging the boy.

Her husband Andres also suf-

fered minor injuries only. De Quirro said. They were sitting at the back of the bus.

Jay Barquilla of Timambak, Ca-

marines Sur, likened the speed of

the bus to the Bicol Express.

"It was running very fast. It could barely sleep from nervousness. I was lucky I only suffered these injuries," he said, showing the bruises on different parts of the body.

According to residents of the area, that section of road used to be protected by steel railings but the structure was torn away by numerous accidents in the past.

## Air Force chopper crashes; no one hurt

A PHILIPPINE AIR FORCE HELICOPTER crashed yesterday while on a search and rescue mission in San Ildefonso, Bulacan. The three military personnel on board survived with no apparent injuries.

A PAF spokesperson said the McDonnell Douglas MD-520MG Defender was escorting another helicopter, a UH-1H "Huey," when it plowed into a sparsely vegetated mountain slope in Barangay Alagao at about 12:45 p.m.

The two choppers had taken off from Fort Magsaysay in Laur, Nueva Ecija, on a rescue mission

involving a capsized pump boat carrying Army troops, according to Maj. Augusto de la Peña, Air Force assistant director for media.

The PAF was still verifying the cause of the crash. Initial reports indicated the two pilots—Capt. Fernando G. Ventura and 1st Lt. Marvin Santiago—and lone crewman Sgt. Darwin Virtuoso escaped injury, De la Peña said.

The incident prompted the grounding of the entire PAF Defender fleet as a matter of standard procedure.

The ill-fated chopper was one of the 24 "brand new" Defenders

acquired by the PAF in 1990 under the United States foreign military assistance program, De la Peña said. A versatile aircraft, the Defender cost \$1.3 million each at the time, he said.

Until yesterday's mishap, 17 of the 24 units were in operation under the 15th Strike Wing, the major added.

Ambassador to Washington Albert del Rosario, meanwhile, announced that the Philippines currently has 26 helicopters in various stages of refurbishment in the United States. The US is funding the rehabilitation of 20 of the helicopters, he said.

The helicopters were those pledged by US President George W. Bush to the Philippines during his October 2003 state visit where he committed to provide 20 helicopters plus 10 helicopters as spares. The six other helicopters undergoing refurbishment are being paid for under the Armed Forces of the Philippines' modernization fund.

Del Rosario said the Philippines stands to receive 14 fully refurbished helicopters this year with a possible two more for a total of 16 in 2006, with the rest of the helicopters to be delivered in 2007.

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# Lifting of VAT on oil seen, draws House support

From page A1

House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles announced at a press conference yesterday.

"The price of gasoline will become an unreachable star, an impossible dream, if we will not act posthaste," Nograles said.

Oil companies in the country raised by 50 centavos a liter the prices of gasoline, diesel and kerosene over the weekend and are expected to further raise them to reflect the higher cost of crude.

## All-time high

Oil prices hit an all-time high of \$75.35 a barrel at the New York Mercantile Exchange on Friday after Iran continued to defy world pressure to halt its nuclear program; a quarter of Nigeria's output lay idle after rebel attacks, and Iraq's once considerable oil industry was mired in crisis.

Instead of repealing the VAT law, Nograles proposed a resolution asking Malacañang to suspend the tax.

He said the resolution, which expresses the sense of Congress, would only seek a suspension of Republic Act No. 9337, or the VAT law, so that there would be no need for another law.

"The House can adopt the reso-

lution in plenary session, while the Senate can also do so to fast-track the process," he said.

Congress, which started its Lenten break on April 8, has only 10 days left for its summer session. It will resume session on May 15 and adjourn on June 9.

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero said the political opposition would readily support Malacañang's proposal.

He pointed out that the minority had long argued that the VAT on petroleum products was burdensome and unnecessary.

"Now if they really want to lift the VAT on oil products, and this move is being initiated by the majority, it can be done," Escudero said.

While the House is receptive to the proposal to exempt fuel from the VAT, the Department of Finance is not.

A finance official said the proposal would result in revenue losses that could derail the government's fiscal reform agenda.

"The reduction of duties we can agree on. The President can simply issue an executive order (to implement the tariff cut)," the finance official told reporters.

The official said the government would lose P2.5 billion for every 1-percentage-point reduction in the tariff, but the amount

FUEL PRICES	
Product	Prevailing prices (peso per liter)*
Premium unleaded gasoline	37.79-39.26
Unleaded gasoline	37.15-38.53
Diesel	32.79-34.42
Kerosene	35.60-38.00
LPG (11-kg cylinder)	408.87-473.84

\*EXCEPT LPG

would be more than offset by the incremental revenue from the increase in oil prices.

For every \$1 increase in the price of crude oil, the government collects P1 billion in additional revenue from the tariff, according to the official.

But the official said it would be difficult to recover from other sources the P29 billion in foregone revenue from the lifting of global prices stabilized at \$65 per barrel.

## Cut spending

Should the proposal to lift the VAT on oil be pursued, the government should restrict its spending so it could keep its fiscal target of reducing the budget deficit to zero by 2008.

"To keep its deficit neutral, government should postpone the

P13-billion expenditure for Executive Order No. 366, or the government's rationalization program," said Salceda, who has the President's ear on economic matters.

In September last year, Salceda, chair of the House economic affairs and appropriations committee, asked the President to certify as urgent a resolution he filed to defer the VAT on oil until global prices stabilized at \$65 per barrel.

In a statement, Sen. Ralph Recto said he had no objection to "Malacañang's signals that it can live without the new VAT."

"If it thinks that the VAT as a bitter fiscal medicine is no longer needed, that the patient is hale and hearty, and can be unplugged from the VAT life support system, then nobody

would be happier than an institution which grudgingly acceded to such a tax," said Recto, chair of the Senate ways and means committee.

But Malacañang should be prepared to "give up the higher spending VAT has given it, for after all it is the one who enjoys disbursing it," he said.

Aside from the budgetary impact, it must also assess what a VAT retraction would do to the country's debt and deficit reduction plan, and to our interest and foreign exchange rates. Our creditors will hyperventilate and panic and we should be ready to calm them," he said.

Defensor acknowledged that the biggest issue in suspending the tax and tariff on oil was the impact on the fiscal picture.

Ms Arroyo lobbied for the imposition of VAT on oil in 2005, specifically to cure the country's chronic budget deficit problem.

"I think we really need a joint resolution from Congress to effect the tax exemption on oil," Defensor said.

## Other options

He said the government was also considering other options to address the rising oil prices such as buying supplies from non-members of the Organiza-



AN ACTIVIST protests the series of oil price increases in front of the Petron office in Makati. EDWIN BACASAS

tion of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) like Russia.

"We have to look at all the options and then explain to the public why we are doing this and why we are not doing this," Defensor said.

But he said Malacañang would reject any proposal to regulate the oil industry and to subsidize fuel prices. "The effect of these measures will still be the same so we have to be careful because our budget deficit is also a primary concern for us." With a report from Abigail Ho

# Batasan 5 await Supreme Court decision on DOJ jurisdiction

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE BATASAN 5 YESTERDAY asked the Makati Regional Trial Court to suspend proceedings on rebellion charges against them in deference to the Supreme Court.

At a press conference, the lawmakers said the court proceedings could not continue until the high court had ruled on their pending petition questioning the jurisdiction and impartiality of the Department of Justice in its conduct of the preliminary investigation.

They also asked the Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 137 to

hold a hearing on April 28 to determine the existence of a probable cause against them, a process respondents in a criminal case could resort to ahead of a formal trial.

But if all legal maneuvers fail, the militant lawmakers indicated they would not resist arrest.

## Won't resist arrest

"We can't resist arrest," said party-list Rep. Teodoro Casifio of Bayan Muna.

Rep. Satur Ocampo, also of Bayan Muna, expected police to "bodily carry us out" of the Batasan complex as part of their

"grand conspiracy to kick us out of Congress."

However, Rep. Rafael Mariano of Anakpawis said he and his colleagues would still question the irregular issuance of warrants "in the proper forum."

## Fabulous, incredible

Ocampo, Casifio and Mariano are among five militant lawmakers who have been given protective custody by the House of Representatives to prevent them from being arrested before any formal charges against them had been filed.

They also asked the Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 137 to

all five viewed the DOJ decision to include them in the rebellion case lodged earlier against Anakpawis party-list Rep. Crispin Beltran as "posthaste, illegal and biased."

Casifio said the amended information was "so fabulous and incredible it would pass as an excellent telenovela of epic proportions" and a "perfect example of persecution by political association."

He pointed out that the DOJ resolution alleged that he and the party-list lawmakers, along with other militant leaders, conspired to commit armed re-

billion from 1969 to 2006.

Among the crimes mentioned was the Plaza Miranda bombing in Manila in 1970.

"What would I know about the Plaza Miranda bombing?" said a startled Casifio, who said he was only 2 years old when grenades exploded during a Liberal Party rally at the plaza, killing several people.

## The hand of GMA

"Using the DOJ's logic, then everyone who was associated with the Left in the past three decades should be charged with rebellion. This includes

(presidential advisers) Mike Defensor, Bobi Tiglao and the President herself, who once admitted harboring wounded New People's Army in her house," said Casifio.

"The DOJ merely fulfilled the task given them by Ms Arroyo to silence and persecute us, and facilitate our arrest and detention," said Gabriela party-list Rep. Liza Maza.

Ocampo said: "Beyond the DOJ, we believe it's President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and her cabal of advisers on national security who are behind this maneuver."

# 6 solons, Gringo charged with rebellion

From page A1

condemn as a violation of our right to due process of law the posthaste and indecent filing by the Department of Justice ... of (the case) against the progressive party-list representatives in Congress," Ocampo said.

Ocampo, along with Casifio, Mariano, Maza and Virador, has been under protective House custody for weeks. (See related story on Page A6).

Before the filing of the charges, government people had been releasing videos and documents to media to support the administration's claim of the existence of conspiracies against Ms Arroyo. Some of those named in the documents had described the evidence as fabrications.

## A hundred days

The DOJ prosecutors filed the charges before Makati Regional Trial Court Judge Jenny Lind Aldecoa-Delos. They recommended no bail.

Others charged included former military officials Jake Malajacan and Felix Turingan, Magdalo soldiers First Lieu-

tenant Angelbert Gay, Patricio Bumindang and Lawrence San Juan, and 2nd Lt. Aldrin Baldonado, and Sison's wife Juliet.

"After a careful evaluation of the evidence on record, we find probable cause to charge respondents for the crime of rebellion," the DOJ panel said in its resolution.

In an amended complaint, the justice department said the Communist Party of the Philippines and its affiliates were involved in a 100-day campaign to oust Ms Arroyo that would have culminated on May 1 this year.

## Legal fronts

The justice department said the plot called for street protests in Metro Manila, after which members of the New People's Army and the rightist group Malayang Kawayan ng Pilipino (MKP) would supposedly join hands to attack Malacañang.

It alleged that the party-list groups of the six lawmakers were "legal fronts" of the CPP.

The decision to launch (the) rebellion was conceptualized and agreed upon

on (and continued to be reaffirmed and carried out) by the Central Committee of the CPP whose members include the organizations headed by Beltran, Ocampo, Virador, Mariano ... and Maza," among others, the justice department said in its resolution.

It also said: "Respondents, through their respective organizations, the CPP/NPA/NDF and MKP decided to join forces to carry out their objective of overthrowing the duly constituted government."

## Coups and assassinations

The justice department claimed this information was obtained from flash drives and diskettes recovered from Lieutenant San Juan.

It also said the transcripts from the flash drives showed what the organizations had accomplished and courses of action to grab power and install a transitional council.

The unified action of respondents, such as ambuscades, assassinations, coup plots and other atrocities, undeniably show an intricate web of conspiratorial acts of armed rebellion," the reso-

lution said.

"The atrocities mentioned did not happen by accident, or by coincidence. They were deliberate and orchestrated for a common political objective—the seizure of political power."

The justice department pointed out that several witnesses had identified the accused as "performing rebellious acts" against the government.

"Well-settled is the rule that positive identification of an accused by a credible witness as the perpetrator of the crime demolishes alibi, the much abused sanctuary of felons," it said.

## Judges has last word

The justice department panel, led by State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco, also recommended that further investigation of Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim of the Scout Rangers, Lt. Senior Grade Antonio Trillanes IV, Albert de Mesa Guyal, Edwin Alcid and Rafael Galvez to determine their role in the alleged conspiracy.

The information actually amended an earlier rebellion case it had filed against Beltran and San Juan.

Judge Aldecoa-Delos said that in line with procedure, the court would not automatically admit the amended information.

"The respondents will be given a chance to comment on the motion to admit the amended information. Then we shall set it for hearing," she told the inquirer. "The amended information is not automatically admitted."

## Arrest warrants

The issuance of arrest warrants against the new accused would depend upon the court's ruling on the expected opposing comments from the defendants and corresponding replies of the prosecution panel.

Romeo Capulong, lawyer for the accused sectoral representatives, said his team would file a motion asking the court to strike out the amended information "on very valid grounds."

He also expressed confidence that the court would not issue arrest warrants any time soon.

In a related move, Aldecoa-Delos granted the wish of the ailing Beltran to be transferred from the Philippine National Police General Hospital to the Philippine Heart Center, where he preferred to have his medical treatment. With a report from Michael Lim Ubac

## List of Respondents

Rep. Crispin Beltran
1st Lt. Lawrence San Juan
Jose Ma. Sison@Joma/Amado
Guerror/Armando Liwanag
Juliet Sison
Luis Jalandoni
Gregorio Rosal @ Ka Roger
Tirso Alcantara @ Ka Bart
Benjamin Mendoza @ Ivan
Benito Tiamzon @ Cebu
Gregorio Honasan @ Doc
Jake Malajacan
Felix Turingan
1st Lt. Angelbert Gay
at Lt. Patricio Bumindang
2nd Lt. Aldrin Baldonado
Atty. Christopher Belmonte
Rep. Rafael Mariano
Rep. Saturnino Ocampo
Rep. Teodoro Casifio
Rep. Joel Virador
Rep. Liza Maza
Vicente Ladlad
Nathaniel Santiago
Sotero Liams @ Nogon
Julio Atienza @ Kulas/Donato/Adan
Edilberto Escudero @ Egay
Rosemarie Domanais @ Insa/Upeng
Rogalio Villanueva @ Makiling
Leo Velasco
Rafael Baylosis
Prudencio Calubid
Philip Limjoco
Julius Giron
Allan Jasminez
Antonio Cabanatan

# SC urged to halt Aussie mine project

By Blanche S. Rivera

AN ANTIMINING group composed of indigenous people has asked the Supreme Court to reconsider its decision allowing an Australian mining company to proceed with the \$117-million Didipio gold-copper mining project in two provinces in Luzon.

The Didipio Earth-Savers Multi-Purpose Association Inc. (Desama) filed a motion for reconsideration with the Supreme Court yesterday in a last-ditch attempt to save 37,000 hectares of agricultural land from large-scale mining operations.

#### Last chance

The Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center (LRC), which has questioned the constitutionality of the Mining Act of 1995 in two cases including Desama's, said the motion was the last chance to raise policy questions on the Mining Act. The LRC is a nongovernment organization that focuses on the enforcement of environmental legislation and acts as Desama's counsel in the case before the Supreme Court.

"This is probably the last pleading that we will file on the case," LRC's Melizel Asuncion said at a press conference yesterday. "There is a limit to the pleadings we can file on a case. It has to stop somewhere and we recognize that."

#### Families divided

"No matter how the court decides, the reality is that there is a struggle on the ground. Families are being divided and nobody is getting rich because of mining," she said.

The Supreme Court ruled on March 30 that Climax-Arimco Mining Corp.'s financial or technical assistance agreement with the government was constitutional, removing all legal barriers to its operations.

The company, which is 99 percent Australian-owned, executed the agreement with the Ramos administration in June 1994 covering 37,000 hectares in Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino.

#### Legal hurdles

The company secured a permit to mine 23.8-million tons of gold and copper for 15 years from the Didipio project. It estimates that the project site has a potential of 121 million tons of minerals.

The company, now named Australasian Philippines Mining Inc., however, has yet to operate due to legal hurdles initiated by antimining groups.

"We are still hopeful that the truth about the state of our barangay would come out, that the court will see what is really happening in the area," Peter Duyap, a kagawad of Didipio, Kasibu, Nueva Vizcaya, said in Filipino.

In its 20-page motion, Desama said that only the state had the power of eminent domain which would enable it to acquire a private property upon just compensation. The Mining Act, however,

does not provide for the determination of just compensation.

"The law is clear. Only private entities

that operate public utilities work as exception to the rule barring further delegation of an already

delegated power," Desama said in its

memorandum.

"Any taking that

does not comply with

these constitutional restrictions is unlawful. And any law allowing for this unlawful exercise must

be struck down for its patent unconstitutionality," the group said.

Duyap said less

than half of Barangay Didipio's 1,700 residents were promising. Most of these promising groups have already sold their lands to the mining company.

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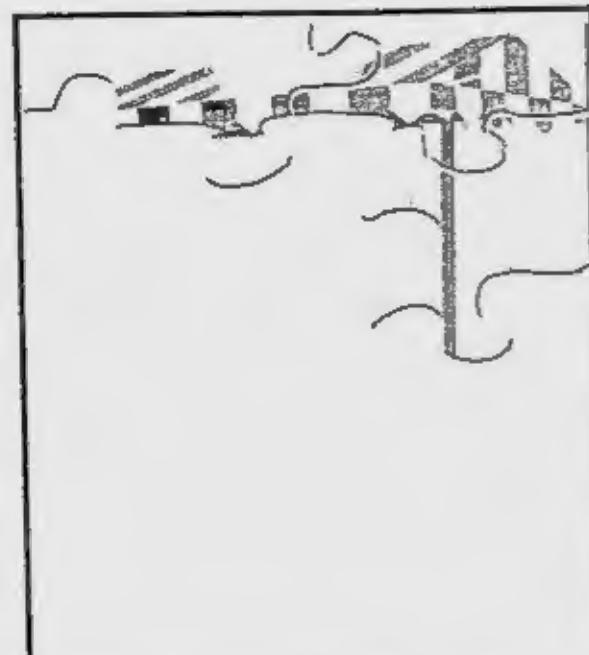
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# Top DepEd exec fires parting shot at GMA

From page A1

which criticized the administration for having a "low regard" for the "professionalism of the civil service and the career executive service corps."

Luz is an older brother of Executive Director Guillermo "Bill" Luz of the Makati Business Club, some of whose leaders last year called for the resignation of Ms Arroyo in the wake of the "Hello Gato" wiretapping scandal.

In his letter, Mike Luz said that "its value is placed on genuine education reforms by this administration."

"My greatest regret now is that the education reforms we have worked hard to put in place may not survive this administration's preoccupation with political expediency rather than genuine reform, with deal-making rather than development, as well as the lack of appreciation much less commitment to the

rule of law and good governance," the former education official said.

Malacañang shrugged off Luz's criticism.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said these were just Luz's "opinions, especially (as) he is adversely affected by the order for him to be relieved" from his education post.

"He may have said that because he felt bad," Ermita told reporters.

## Not the only one

Ermita also said that if the media would ask other officials at the DepEd, he was certain they would tell them that it was not only Luz who could pursue such reforms.

Luz said his experience showed "a low level of trust in the Department of Education as contributing to the development of this country as a nation."

In September last year, Malacañang fired Luz, then education undersecretary for finance and administration, after he refused to accept postdated checks from the President's Social Fund made out to the department but intended for Rep. Antonio Diaz of Zamboanga.

Diaz was among the congressmen who voted to dismiss an impeachment complaint against Ms Arroyo last year.

Luz had said that honoring the postdated checks would be in violation of government accounting rules and regulations.

He was then ordered transferred to the labor department.

He appealed to the Civil Service Commission, saying he could not be transferred summarily by the Palace since he was a career executive service officer and could be dismissed only for cause. He lost the appeal.

In his resignation letter, Luz said the Palace had shown a "high disregard for government accounting rules and regulations with civil servants expected to follow instructions in the face of this disregard for law at their peril."

"I have indicated publicly that I have no desire to be reassigned at the President's pleasure to some other agency 'for the exigency of the service'—two of the misused concepts in the vocabulary of the Office of the President," Luz said.

## No quick fixes

He said that in the last three years, a lot had been done to put in place education reforms as part of the changes started during the term of Secretary Edilberto de Jesus and carried out into the term of Florencio "Butch" Abad.

"Public education is a sector

where there are no quick fixes," Luz stressed.

"It takes 10 years to educate a child in basic education ... There is no room for quick-fix solutions with dubious value-added to the public school system (e.g., Strong Republic Schools, rice distribution rather than in-school feeding programs and the like). What is needed is steady, continuous and committed investment based on a clear and focused education agenda."

Luz also said that since the start of the Arroyo administration, the department had not been rocked by any procurement scandals, save for inaccuracies found in one textbook that was procured a long time ago.

He attributed this to the work put in by DepEd officials to erase the image of the department as a corrupt government agency.

"Since 2002, education reforms, both in terms of financial management and support to the academic programs of schools and school division, have helped establish the DepEd as one of the five cleanest (least corrupt) national agencies in the Social Weather Stations annual survey," adding:

"This has been cause for great pride in the DepEd considering that ours was once listed as one of the five most corrupt agencies in the same survey prior to 2002."

In a separate letter to DepEd officer in charge Pe Hidalgo, Luz said he was tendering his resignation effective April 21 and urged her to continue the reforms in education.

He told reporters in a text message that he was taking on the presidency of an international non-government organization. With a report from Christine O. Avendano

## PCSO TODAY

# Grassroots charity STL to generate P7.2 billion in first year

THE PHILIPPINE CHARITY Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) announced that the small-town lottery (STL) is projected to generate some P7.2 billion on its first year of operation.

The STL, just like the sweepstakes and lotto games of the PCSO, will also generate funds for the agency's Charity Fund, which is the source of funding for PCSO's medical assistance to indigents.

Of the net revenues generated by PCSO (less government taxes and agents' fees), a fixed 30 percent goes to the Charity Fund, 55 percent to the prize fund, and 15 percent to the operating fund.

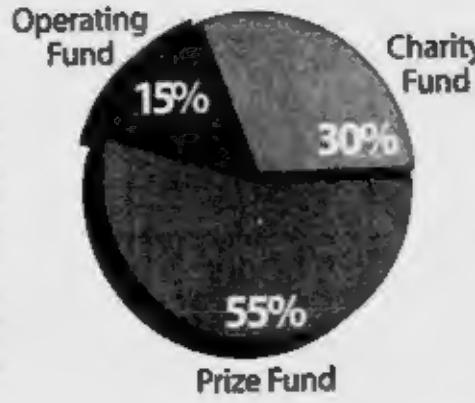
Under the STL scheme, the agency is proposing to share the charity fund that will be generated by STL to the local government as well as the local Philippine National Police (PNP).

About 10 percent of the charity fund from STL will go to the city or municipality where the numbers game operates, while five percent will go to the provincial government.

Also, the proposal seeks to give 2.5 percent to the congressional district of the area where the STL is held and five percent to the local PNP.

The proceeds of STL will directly reach the local government units. It will go to the municipal treasurer's office. We did this to effectively decentralize the use of charity funds.

PCSO intends to execute a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with local government units on how to disburse the funds given to them via STL," said Lauro Patig, Legal Department Head of PCSO.



The rest of the charity fund will go to PCSO.

PCSO directly benefits indigent Filipinos nationwide through charitable programs such as the Individual Medical Assistance Program, institutional charity programs, medical missions nationwide and special health programs in collaboration with other government agencies, among others.

Aside from its existing medical assistance programs, PCSO also contributes to the coffers of the national government as mandated by various laws.

R.A. 7722 mandates that one percent of PCSO's gross sales is allotted to the Commission on Higher Education, while R.A. 8136 states

that 10 percent of the net earnings of the agency is given to the Crop Insurance Program of the government.

PCSO also contributes to the government's National Shelter Program.

With STL, more funds will be raised to augment sales revenues from existing games of the PCSO, which also means more funds for the charity program.

This is particularly important for PCSO as the demands for more medical aid and charity programs have steadily increased during the last several years.

Dr. Larry Cedro, Assistant Department Manager of the PCSO Charity Clinic, had earlier said in a press conference that in 2005, the demand for medical assistance increased by about 32 percent.

"For 2005, we had an increase of about 32 percent. There's a huge demand for services. This is especially true for chemotherapy requests from cancer patients and dialysis treatments for those with renal ailments. We also expanded our services like the ambulance donation program. So, for us to realize these programs, we need to generate more funds. Kaya naman STL," he said.

"Pang bisita ninyo at araw na ang game, ang dawing pumipila. And in order to extend assistance to these people, we need more funds," Cedro added.

He also said that aside from fund generation, the implementation of the STL is also seen to generate employment and livelihood to thousands of Filipinos displaced by the campaign against jaeuteng.

## STL is legal

THE PHILIPPINE CHARITY Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) is mandated to conduct lotteries nationwide, including the small-town lottery (STL), based on Republic Act 1169, an enabling law of the charity agency.

Section 1 of the statute expressly authorizes PCSO to hold and conduct lotteries and other similar activities in such frequency and manner in accordance with the rules and regulations determined by its Board of Directors.

According to PCSO, STL is a form of lottery and there is no dispute that the charity agency can implement the numbers game.

PCSO cited a Supreme Court decision indicating the charter of the agency does not prohibit it from holding or conducting lottery in collaboration with other parties.

The Court's decision empowered PCSO to enter into a contract for the holding of the lottery with another party as long as the agency itself holds or conducts such lottery.

Also, an opinion of the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel (OGCC) in 2005 declared that the scheme by which the test runs for the STLs will be implemented appeared to be legally feasible, provided it's conducted in the same way PCSO operates its sweepstakes and lotto.

## LGU and PNP can 'make or break' STL

THE SUCCESS of the small-town lottery (STL) project of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) depends on the support of local government units (LGUs) and the Philippine National Police (PNP), according to proponents of the numbers game.

In separate media interviews, anti-illegal gambling czar Edward Hagedorn and PCSO legal department head Lauro Patig both said the STL will only be operated in areas where the respective provincial, city or municipal councils passed resolutions in support of the numbers game.

Patig agreed and said the STL will only be operated in areas where the respective provincial, city or municipal councils passed resolutions in support of the numbers game.

He added that the PNP's cooperation in the effort to implement STL is also crucial in preventing

municipal mayors, for an alternative livelihood for the thousands of individuals displaced by the government's successful drive against the illegal numbers game jaeuteng.

"PCSO believes the STL will succeed if there is real support from the respective local government unit and the police," he said.

According to the PCSO, the idea to revive the STL also cropped up during a hearing of the House Committee on Public Order and Security on jaeuteng in June last year. At the panel hearing, the possibility of implementing a program that will address the plight of displaced jaeuteng cases and cabarets was discussed.

Also, members of the League of Municipalities of the Philippines (LMP) from Region I to Region V,

as well as the Cordillera Autonomous Region, endorsed a resolution stating their approval of STL as an option, in response to President Arroyo's call to eradicate jaeuteng. The resolution was addressed to PCSO.

After several meetings and discussions among officials of PCSO, the Office of the President, and the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel on the legality of the STL, the PCSO board of directors approved a resolution calling for a test run of the game.

PCSO Board Resolution No. 464, dated Dec. 28, 2005, effected the approval of the rules and regulations governing the conduct of STL in various pilot areas in

Luzon.

In February, the STL was run in pilot test areas in Quezon province, Pampanga, Batangas and Quezon City.

In late March, the National Police Commission, in coordination with PCSO, released guidelines for STL operations to policemen.

Under the guidelines, police cannot arrest anybody authorized by the PCSO to operate the STL except if there are complaints from the PCSO, local government officials, religious groups, and non-government organizations.

Arrests can also be conducted when operators violate Republic Act 9287 or the Anti-illegal Gambling Act.

## Role in nation-building

DONALD NGWE, a Bachelor of Science in Economics graduate who delivered the response on behalf of the graduating class, said the hallmark of UP education, or "tatak UP" was the desire to rid society of its sickness and to learn fundamental truths "in different ways, in different fields."

Each graduate, according to Ngwe, has his or her role in nation-building: Musicians in creating masterpieces, journalists in reporting the truth, teachers in guiding the next generation, engineers in building infrastructure in the community, and businessmen, government workers and economists in implementing policies for the common good.

"Our generation is called upon to face the problems confronting our nation. Let us use our strength and wit to enrich our land, instead of leaving our shores for better opportunities abroad," he said.

## Acts of good citizenship

Ngwe said the graduates could help move the country forward through acts of good citizenship, such as paying one's taxes and obeying the law.

Guest of honor was Edgardo Gomez, a professor emeritus, world-renowned marine biologist and founding director of the UP Marine Science Institute (MSI).

Gomez discussed the beginnings of MSI, and how it became the country's foremost research institution for marine biology and chemistry, physical oceanography, among other disciplines.

He stressed the importance of service: "Serve others well before you serve yourself, and the man upstairs ... will look after you."

## Lightning rally

As part of tradition, a lightning rally was staged just before the graduates sang "UP Naming Mahal (UP Beloved)" toward the end of the rites.

A small group of militant students suddenly appeared in front of the stage and began shouting slogans against President Macapagal-Arroyo and demanding justice for murdered activists.

Some of the graduates joined the protesters, who unfurled protest banners and streamers.

Facing the crowd, the militants raised their fists and sang along to the dying strains of their alma mater's song.

## How to be an STL agent

THE PHILIPPINE CHARITY Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) has several guidelines in determining the acceptability of agent corporations for the test run of small-town lottery (STL).

The agency however clarified that it is not an STL franchise that is being offered to private corporations.

The PCSO said what is awarded to agent corporations is not a contract to operate but an agency agreement similar to what the agency gives to lottery agents.

The most important requirement for the operation of the STL in an area is the endorsement of the local government council.

Corporations applying for STL experimental run need to submit the following:

1. Fully accomplished application form signed by the corporation applicant's president or general manager with the corresponding resolution of his/her authority stating therein the area applied for;
2. Articles of incorporation and by-laws duly registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission showing the corporation possesses the following qualifications:
  - a. It must be duly organized for the purpose of conducting marketing and other allied services.

Continued on next page

## AUTHORIZED CORPORATIONS FOR STL TEST RUN (as of April 2006)

COMPANY	Principal Office Address	Area of Operation	Status of Operation
1. Lotus Tahoe Gaming & Amusement Corporation	Cameropolitan Bldg., Kalayaan St., Lourdes Northwest, Angeles City, Pampanga	Angono City	Continuing
2. Suncove Corporation	Landmark Bldg., Kalayaan Village, Quezon City, San Fernando City, Pampanga	20 municipalities, 1 city	For launching
3. Sunset Bay Research and Marketing Corporation	RCM Bldg., Sta. Rosa, Macauz, Quezon	11 municipalities, 1 city	Continuing
4. Phoenix Corporation	20 Evangcar Condo St., Lourdes - City, Quezon	40 municipalities, 1 city	Continuing
5. Royal Viva Research	2347 Malibay St., Brgy. Payatas, San Jose, Occ. Mindoro	Occidental Mindoro	Continuing
6. Benchmark Acquisition International Corporation	Unit 108, Prime Vision Bldg., 16th Avenue and P. P. Roxas St., QC	Quezon City, Metro Manila	Suspended
7. Remaid Corporation	Parcels Bank Building, Rizal Ave., San Pablo City, Laguna	Province of Laguna	Continuing

Adv.

# Ex-beauty queen Chat Silayan dies; 46

From page A1

ter in Quezon City, according to her mother Antonietta Rivera.

The daughter of the late actor Vic Silayan, Chat is survived by her husband Mike Bailon and children Victor Anthony, Timothy and Michaela.

Her remains lie at the Santuario de San Antonio in Forbes Park, Makati City. Interment is set for Saturday at the Manila Memorial Park in Sucat, Parañaque City.

"Chat died in her sleep," her mother said. "She didn't seem to be in pain. Mike had told me the night before that Chat wanted to see me. When I arrived the next day at 4:30 p.m., she was asleep. I thought of waking her up but changed my mind because I decided it was better for her to rest. Now I wish I did wake her up—at least she'd have known that I was around."

## Another picture

Silayan's friend, singer Kuh Ledesma, saw another picture.

"I know for a fact that she suffered a lot because of the cancer," Ledesma recalled. "But she was very courageous because she was certain that she would go to heaven."

The last time she saw Silayan, the singer said, was six months ago. "At the time, I had heard she was already in a bad way, but there she was at the mall with her family ... I think they were going to see a movie."

Rivera said her daughter had started feeling pains in the abdomen and lower back two years ago, but that the actress, a health buff, had brushed off those symptoms, saying they were probably just the result of a rigid exercise regimen.

Finally, Rivera recounted, Silayan was alarmed when she passed blood in her urine and stool. She went for a checkup then, the mother said.

Her daughter had insisted that discussions about her illness be kept to a minimum, Rivera added.

"Michael was her faithful companion throughout this battle," she said. "Even while we accepted that death came to everyone sooner or later, we were all hoping for a miracle for Chat."

## Inevitable

Silayan's colleague, Angeli Pangilinan-Valeciano, shared Rivera's sentiment: "We never considered death as an inevitability for Chat. She was a good person. Whenever we saw each other, we always talked about healing."

For the past seven years, Silayan's show biz career had been handled by Valeciano's talent management company, Manila Genesis Entertainment.

Silayan also belonged to the New Life Christian Fellowship in Alabang, Muntinlupa.

"I will miss our prayer time together," said Valeciano.

Within an hour of Silayan's passing, her friend and fellow beauty queen Desiree Verdadero had sent text messages breaking the news to all interested parties, including the media.

Salud himself said he found out about Silayan's passing from 1979 Binibining Pilipinas Universe Dang Cecilio.

"Chat and I started our [separate] careers together. If it were not for her, Dang, Melanie (Marquez) and the other girls [I helped dress up as beauty queens], I wouldn't be where I am now," he added.

"I will always remember Chat as the one who made the *serpentina* famous [again]."

## Final exit

Silayan had worn Salud's creation, a light blue *serpentina* (tight-fitting torso that flares dramatically at the knees) for the 1980 Miss Universe competition in Seoul, South Korea.

Now for this, her final exit, Silayan is wearing another Salud creation—an *ecru* gown made from *pina* fabric, with an embroidered collar and long sleeves with ruffles.

He explained: "Chat was always a big lover of *Filipiniana*. I am at once glad and sad that her last outfit was something I had made."

Silayan was also a registered nutritionist-dietitian with a degree from the Philippine Women's University. She passed the board exams in 1979.

## Movie career

In the movies, she was last seen in Star Cinema's "My First Romance" (2003). Until recently, she cohosted with Dulce and Peter Kairuz the weekly show "700 Club Asia," which reports and dramatizes modern "marias."

Her other films included "Kung Ako Na Lang Sana" (2003), "Esperanza: The Movie" (1999), "Ipaglaban Mo: The Movie Part 2" (1997) and "Dyesebel" (1990).

Along with other Born Again Christians like Ledesma and Coney Reyes, Silayan had taken an active part in the presidential campaign of Bro. Eddie Villanueva—founding director of the Jesus is Lord Church Worldwide—in 2004.

# Junior Inquirer Unicef Hall of Fame awardee

From page A1

child," which was published on Aug. 19-25, 2005, in Balikas in Oriental Mindoro.

In accepting the award, *Inquirer* publisher Isagani Yambot said: "I would like to believe that the *Inquirer* is a child-friendly paper because its editors and reporters have retained their sense of child-like wonder. They can see things through the fresh eyes of a child."

"We give a lot of attention to children. We try to direct their energies and inquisitiveness toward beneficial and productive paths. We devote many stories to them, we try to present them always in a positive light," said Yambot. "A part of our Manual of

Editorial Policies deals with the treatment of photos and stories involving children."

Colin Davis of the Unicef said of the winners: "Let us recognize those journalists and editors who shine above the rest—remaining undaunted by the 'complications' of reporting about children, and doing so with compassion, sharp analysis and outstanding journalistic skills."

Davis said the Unicef had commissioned the Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication and the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility to make a study on how the Philippine media had been covering children's issues and concerns.

Their findings were "disturbing," he

said. They found out that there were still irresponsible journalists out there who revealed the identities of victims of child abuse or those who were in conflict with the law. Sometimes "judgmental words" were used to describe them.

*Junior Inquirer* is published every Saturday and is directly distributed for free to its 109 partner schools in Metro Manila. It contains regular sections like World Scope, Journal Pages, For and by kids, Kids' Traffic and Out There.

It has 14 correspondents from the grade school level called the *Jr. Snoops*. This is one of the many ways that the *Junior Inquirer* ensures that it remains close to the heart of its readers—the children.

Other awardees were: Mylah Reyes Roque, Outstanding Story on Children, for "The forgotten children," published on April 11, 2005 in *Newsbreak Magazine*;

Yolly S. Fuertes, Outstanding Story on Children, for "Special kids get special hope," published on May 15, 2005 in *The Pangasinan Star*;

Joanne Ang, Outstanding Child Writer, of the *Southern Leyte Times*.

Mindanao Times (community daily category) and Baguio Midland Courier (community weekly category) also received Child-Friendly Newspaper of the Year awards.

Special recognition was given to *Health Today* for being a Child-Friendly Magazine.

# STL on test run in 5 Luzon areas

THE SMALL-TOWN lottery (STL) is now currently in its test run in four areas in Luzon to find out if it is viable for the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) to implement the numbers game in full swing.

Lauro Patlag, head of PCSO's legal department, said the test run is now being implemented in Angeles, Pampanga; Quezon province, Batangas, and Mindoro Occidental.

Patlag said the STL was launched in mid-February on an "experimental" basis to determine its acceptability as an alternative to the illegal numbers game juegong.

He added the STL is being pilot tested to gauge whether the public will patronize the game and whether it would bring more revenue to the government.

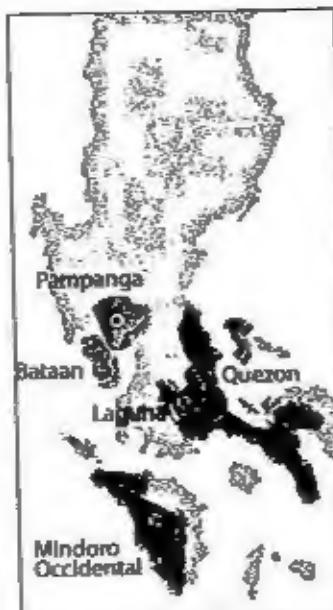
Patlag said the PCSO is also trying to find out if the STL will provide livelihood to those displaced by the campaign to eradicate juegong.

To determine STL's public acceptability, Patlag noted that in December of last year, the PCSO ran an advertisement inviting interested private corporations to submit applications to become STL agents for a period of one year.

Patlag said although the PCSO executed contracts with private corporations for the test runs of STL, the agency's board of directors can always pull the plug on STL if it makes a determination that the venture is not viable.

"Considering that this is on experimental basis, if it is shown later on that this is not feasible, then PCSO will exercise its options under the agreement to pre-terminate it so warranted," he said.

Other than the five areas now in operation, the PCSO said it is also launching STL in other areas in Luzon that volunteered to become pilot areas through provincial, city and municipal council



resolutions.

According to PCSO records, around 50 private corporations applied to be STL agents. Of these, seven have already been authorized by PCSO. They include: Pirouette Corp. (Lucena, Quezon), headed by Francis Gonzalez; Lake Tahoe Gaming and Amusement Corp. (Angeles City) headed by Damian Ramos, President; Benchmark Acquisition International Corp. (Quezon City) owned by a group of "Balibbayan" businessmen; Sunset Bay Research and Marketing Corp. (Bataan); Royal Viva Research Corp. (San Jose City, Mindoro Occidental); Sancove Corp. (San Fernando, Bataan) and Ramold Corp. (San Pablo City, Laguna).

## How to be an STL agent

Continued from last page

- b. It must have a local office accessible to the public within each province, chartered city and/or legislative district designated for actual test runs.
- c. It must be 100 percent owned by Filipino citizens.
- d. It must have a minimum authorized capital stock of P20 million and with a minimum paid-up capital of P5 million.
- e. It must possess the necessary competence, expertise and capitalization to undertake the project as determined by the office.
3. Tax clearance duly issued by the Bureau of Internal Revenue;
4. Audited financial statement and income tax return for the immediately preceding year, if applicable;
5. Joint and Several Solitary Undertaking executed in writing by the stockholders of the applicant corporation binding them personally and directly responsible for any damages, claims or injuries which the authorized corporation may be held liable to pay to PCSO or to any third party arising from the conduct of STL;
6. Bio-data of corporate officers and directors showing their qualifications, integrity and experience;
7. Feasibility study on the experimental area applied for showing, among others, the following:
  - a. Illegal numbers game which operated in the area and its estimated daily sales



# UK women prefer cleaning house to sex, says survey

From page A1

The Independent daily reported that "even in an age when women are making economic strides and excelling in the workplace, the one thing that gives the majority a sense of empowerment is a good go around the house with the vacuum cleaner—followed by some cleaning and dusting."

The online study, commissioned by the Discovery Home and Health website, found that the average woman between 18 and 80 spent nine years, two months and 25 days of her waking life cleaning and tidying.

But 59 percent of the women interviewed would have it no other way and said "cleaning makes them feel in control of their lives," while 60 percent said they found it "mentally therapeutic."

"Where 20 years ago housework was seen by many as a sign of female subjugation, the tide appears to have turned," the paper said.

Nearly six out of 10 women defended their role in the home and said they "felt depressed if their house was a mess," while 59 percent said "untidiness and clutter made them feel tense."

Only a tiny minority of 4 percent felt cleaning the home to be "a waste of time and effort."

The survey of 2,000 women found cleaning chores to be a higher priority than personal grooming, and one third claimed "cleaning gives them more satisfaction than sex."

Even so, 57 percent of the women admitted that cleaning exhausted them, particularly as 71 percent also

had a job.

Although only 22 percent said they actively enjoyed cleaning and tidying, two-thirds said the "results made them happy" and half said it was "visually joyful" that left them feeling "proud of their achievements."

Nearly half of those interviewed (46 percent) described themselves as "cleanaholics," while 46 percent wished they could "cut down on cleaning."

Eight out of 10 respondents compared the cleanliness of their home with other people's, while 70 percent feared they would be thought "lazy" if their homes were untidy.

Only one of 10 women employed a cleaner, but of those six out of 10 "still cleaned up before she or he arrives," the survey said.

AFP

# El Shaddai leader . . .

From page A1

rogative to conduct legislative inquiries.

Malacañang had earlier declared it would invoke executive privilege against "rogue" hearings.

Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan and opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson said Sunday that the Senate would cite officials in contempt and detain them if they refused to participate in their inquiries.

Yesterday, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita told reporters that Malacañang would determine the extent to which it could invoke executive privilege during hearings.

## Palace won't defy court

"I am going to sit down with our legal people to give me the nitty gritty of what and who can invoke executive privilege and that is very crucial," said Ermita. "It's not the attitude that we will defy or we will be indifferent... We will go by the essence and spirit of the decision of the Supreme Court."

Velarde said the court decision was an opportunity to "reestablish cordial working relationships for the common good."

"It's my prayer that our leaders should now come together and discuss all these issues inside a meeting room. I believe very much that they can still come together as responsible leaders and settle their differences inside the conference room, not through media pronouncements," he said.

Velarde advised Malacañang officials to abide by the court ruling.

"We should not disregard any decision of the Supreme Court because we are still a government of laws, not of men. And leaders should be the first one to show an example of adherence to law and order," he said.

## Need to close "Hello Garci"

"I see nothing wrong in investigations for as long as the purpose really is in aid of legislation and to enlighten the parties and the public at large on certain issues because it is our right to know what is going on in government. But to sacrifice time for important legislation just for controversial investigations, I think they should reconsider," Velarde said.

He said the unresolved "Hello Garci" controversy was one issue that the members of the House and the Senate should continue to investigate.

"It's really part of their job, but I think they should give it an ending," he said. "Of course, the only way to give it an ending is to get all the facts."

"There's nothing wrong in getting down to the truth but in doing so we should not forget our responsibility to provide the right direction and solutions to most pressing problems of the country like the economy," he said.

"There are so many people who are unemployed. The investment climate has to be cleared so that investors will come and these political issues serve as a deterrent to investors."

## Calibrated response

To avert a fresh clash between Malacañang and the Senate, Sen. Rodolfo Biazon yesterday proposed the adoption of a four-step "calibrated congressional response" to deal with reluctant witnesses. This is a takeoff on the government's "calibrated preemptive response" to rallies without permits.

"The calibration will start from the issuance of an invitation. If this is refused, we will move on to a higher level, which is the issuance of a subpoena... If this is still refused, we can move to a higher level, issuance of a warrant of arrest," he said.

"And if this still does not work, then we have to go to court."

The senator did not discount citing in contempt witnesses who repeatedly ignored summons.

Biazon said his committee on national defense would adopt this policy when it continues its inquiry into the "Hello Garci" scandal shortly after Congress resumes sessions on May 15. The opposition has said the recordings purportedly between Ms Arroyo and former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano were evidence she stole the 2004 presidential election. Ms Arroyo has denied the charge.

## Define executive privilege

Biazon proposed that Malacañang officials and Senate leaders meet to thrash out differences in interpretation of the court ruling, particularly on what constitutes executive privilege.

"What is the meaning of state secret, military secret and diplomatic secret? There must be a common understanding on what these terms connote," said Biazon.

The committee is eyeing as witnesses military generals and officers, and lawyer Samuel Ong, who surfaced in June last year claiming he had the master copies of the Garci tapes but had since kept a low profile. Ong said he feared for his life.

Administration Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago cautioned her colleagues against rushing to use Congress' contempt powers on defiant witnesses.

"Congress should avoid impulsive retaliatory measures, such as citing for contempt absent Cabinet members or abolishing budgetary appropriations of their departments. It is best to be patient because haste makes bad law," she said in a statement.

House Majority Leader Prospero Nogales and Rep. Eduardo Veloso warned that legislation should not be held hostage by Senate inquiries.

## End 'terrorizing investigations'

"We in Congress must not browbeat or bully or embarrass invited guests. We must not insult them, argue with them and must treat them with respect, especially on their right to privacy. Terrorizing investigations must end," said Nogales.

"We do not wish to interfere in the Senate-Palace squabble. Our intention in appealing to the sense of statesmanship of senators is only to pave the way for a smooth legislative process," said Veloso.

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero accused Malacañang of trying to circumvent the high court's decision.

"What are they so afraid of in answering questions if they did not commit any wrongdoing? If they have nothing to hide, why would they be frightened of the questions that would be thrown at them?" said Escudero. *With reports from Christine O. Avendano, TJ Burgos and Philip C. Tubesa*

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# RP's first integrated ethanol plant to rise in Negros Or.

By Doris C. Dumao

DUMAGUETE—THE PHILIPPINES' first integrated production complex for ethanol, an alternative fuel highly in demand across the globe because of skyrocketing oil prices, will rise in the sugar-farming province of Negros Oriental using P2 billion in fresh investment.

In a chance interview, Rep. Hermeno Teves said the pioneering integrated plantation, distillery and co-generation plant for ethanol using sugarcane would be operational within two years on a 24,116-hectare government property. The complex will be located in the third district of Negros Oriental spanning the municipalities of Sta. Catalina, Siaton, Valencia and Sibulan.

Aiming to replicate the success of other countries like Brazil in the commercial production of ethanol using sugarcane, Teves said the Philippines could maximize its vast agricultural lands to produce this sustainable fuel.

"You can't introduce any system for the production of oil because it's God-given but in the case of sugarcane, we can increase the volume for ethanol," Teves told visiting reporters from Manila, during the lawmaker's 86th birthday celebration held here Sunday night.

#### In pipeline

The ethanol project, an initiative by Teves, is now in the pipeline through a newly incorporated company called Tamlang Valley Development Agricultural Development Corp. Thirty-five percent of the company is owned by the government while 65 percent is owned by a private sector consortium controlled by alcohol distillery Tha Commodity and Teves's own family.

"The corporation is only worth P100 million but the total investment could go up to P2 billion, for the purchase of the equipment and overall project, including the distillery," he said.

The corporation recently signed the lease for the idle government land and is now negotiating with European and Brazilian suppliers to buy the necessary equipment. A purchase deal is expected within the next three months.

#### Foreign investment

"There are also foreign investors wanting to come in," Teves said.

The congressman said ethanol production could be rolled out into a nationwide initiative to reduce reliance on imported crude oil—whose price has gone up to a record-high \$75 per barrel—by converting vast idle properties in Mindanao into sugarcane plantations.

Teves said he suggested to President Macapagal-Arroyo that in order for the model distillery to work, the plantations must be devoted to ethanol production so as not to compete with sugar produced for food consumption.

Prices of sugar in the global market have likewise risen since Brazil pro-

ceeded the commercial production of ethanol using sugarcane.

"In the Philippines, sugarcane is the easiest crop to produce. But considering the world market price for sugar, it will be prohibitive for us to convert existing sugarcane into ethanol. We have to venture into new areas of sugarcane production in order to separately produce ethanol for the purpose of blending with gasoline," Teves said.

#### Prices to remain high

He predicted that sugar prices would remain high in the next five years because many countries were converting sugarcane plantations in-

to ethanol production sites. He noted that 50 percent of sugar plantations in Brazil had been converted to ethanol plantations and distilleries, 30 percent in Thailand and more than 20 percent in Australia.

With the shift to ethanol, he said sugar prices would be buoyant due to the reduction in the sugarcane supply for food consumption.

"Ethanol would be competing with the price of sugar unless we develop an area only for ethanol," he said. "That's why I thought of putting up a corporation for the plantation of sugarcane for ethanol in order to have a distinct land area for ethanol."

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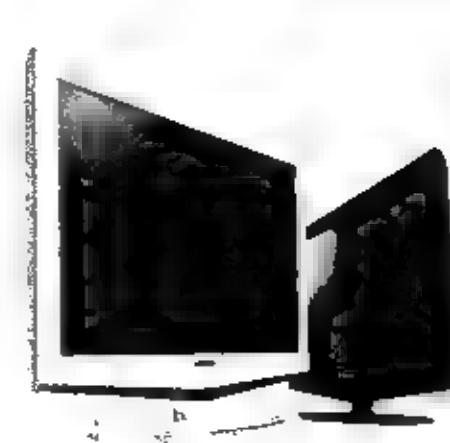
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## Oil shock

THE SUDDEN SURGE IN WORLD OIL PRICES HAS revived calls for power conservation and given greater impetus to the search for alternative sources of energy.

On the conservation side there are the usual tips: Drive your car carefully and maintain it properly. Go easy on the gas pedal. Avoid idling and high speeds. Plan errands so you can combine them into one trip. Keep tires properly inflated.

**EDITORIAL** Turn off everything not in use: lights, TV sets, electronic appliances. Switch to fluorescent lamps. Use natural light whenever possible. Minimize the use of air conditioners and electric fans. Do all the ironing all at one time. Etc.

The energy-saving tips are good for the short term, but long-term measures have to be taken so that the country can enjoy a measure of energy security in the face of the constantly rising prices of fuel oils caused by the seemingly endless turmoil in the Middle East and other parts of the world.

The long-term approach would be to intensify the local search for alternative sources of energy. One rich source is biomass which can be used not only for heating and cooking but also powering vehicles and providing a source of hydrogen for fuel cells and electricity production.

Many provinces, like Albay, Leyte and Negros Oriental, are already producing geothermal energy, but other areas could be explored and developed. Geothermal systems are among the most environmentally benign sources of energy. Geothermal energy could provide a big area of the country with a clean and reliable source of power.

Hydropower could be a rich and cheap source of energy if only the huge volume of water that pours during the rainy season could be stored and dammed. Unfortunately, there is a price to pay for dam building: people and animals pay a stiff ecological price for blocking the free flow of natural river systems.

Nuclear fusion? This does not seem to be a popular idea in the Philippines now, considering its sad and very expensive experience with the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant. Right now, we are paying the dollar equivalent of more than P5 million a day for a power plant that has not produced even one kilowatt of energy and has not benefited us at all.

Solar energy, like geothermal energy, is a powerful source of renewable power. It is also an environment-friendly power source but it has been very much underdeveloped. Currently the technology is still relatively expensive and may not be easily adaptable on a country-wide level in the Philippines.

Wind energy? A green power source, wind energy offers the benefits of a clean, renewable and indigenous source of power. Wind farms have been set up in the Ilocos and Batangas. Other areas might be explored for their potential to produce energy through wind power.

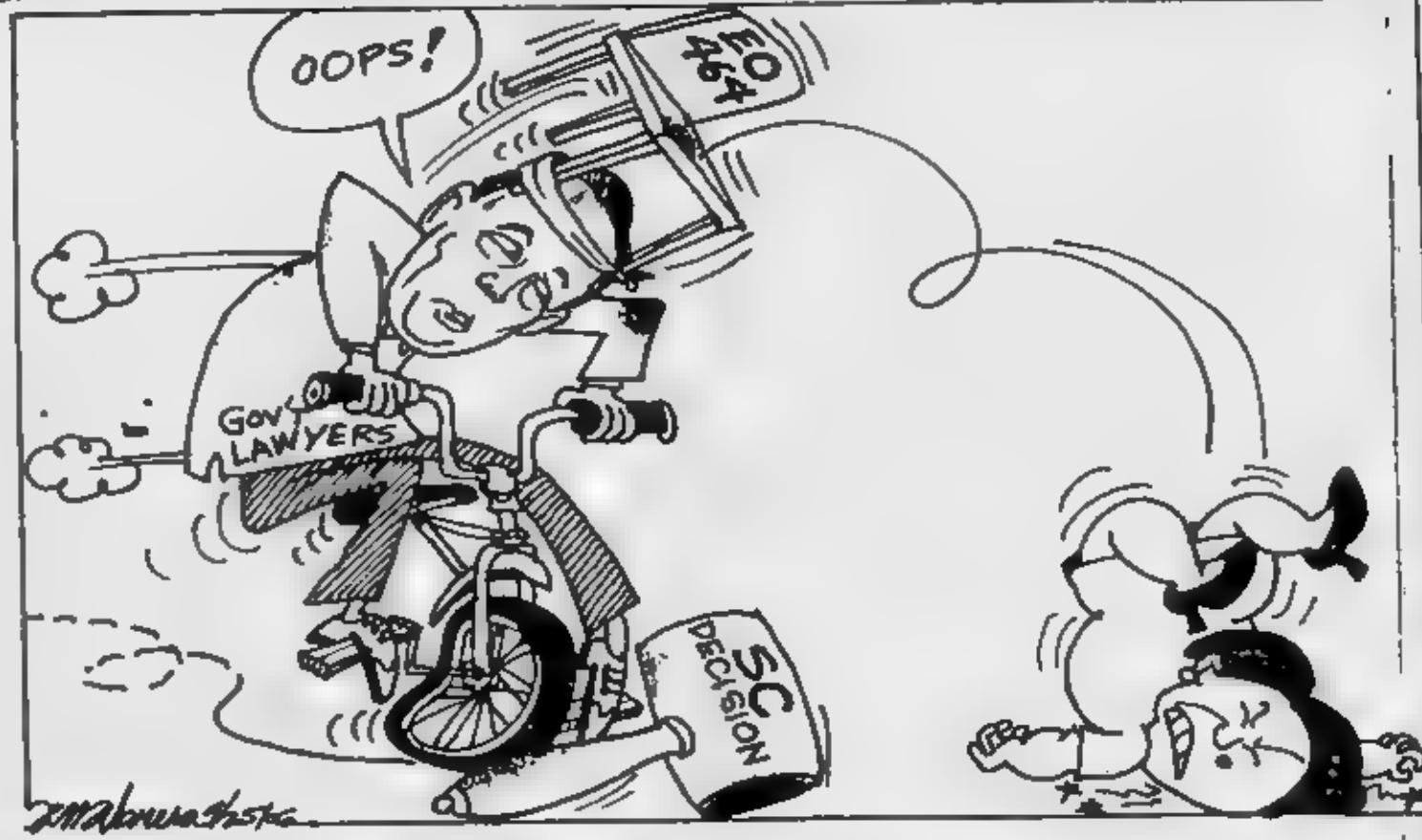
At present, a popular topic of conversation in local energy circles is biofuels, and in particular, ethanol. The proponents of the use of ethanol, called "the fuel of the future," say that it is sustainable for as long as sugarcane, coconuts, cassava and corn could be planted in the country.

Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri's biofuels bill was passed by the House of Representatives and sent to the Senate last November, but up to now it is stuck in the Senate committee on energy. Government leaders should prod the committee to act on the measure more expeditiously; ethanol could replace one-tenth of the national gasoline consumption within four years.

To cope with the new energy crunch, Congress should consider reviewing the Oil Deregulation Law and see whether it has served only the interests of the big oil companies like Shell, Caltex and Petron instead of those of the long-suffering consumers of petroleum products. If the law has produced only misery for the people then it should go.

It is good that Malacañang is proposing the suspension of the expanded VAT on oil up to December or until the oil price stabilizes at \$65 a barrel. That should help ease the burden on the oil consumers who are already feeling the effects of a high inflation rate.

The nation appears to have made a bit of economic progress in recent years, but what little progress it has achieved may be wiped out by the new oil shock that is sending ripples throughout the world, and most especially vulnerable Third World countries like the Philippines. The government and the private sector will have to take some quick measures to meet the crisis before it overwhelms us and puts us back in square one.



## Drinking the pond dry

FOUR YEARS OF FOOT-DRAGGING BY CEBU City bureaucrats are causing an Ayala-led multinational consortium to consider jacking investments for water in the country's most parched metropolis.

Button-down Ayala Corp. is usually bland. But in the latest discussions between the decrepit Metro Cebu Water District and Ayala and Staterland Inc., it candidly states: "Potential co-investors... might withdraw from the project."

Submitted in 2002, the Joint Venture Consortium proposal would funnel 50,000 cubic meters of water daily from Carmen to the city, a distance of 39 kilometers. Metro Cebu's daily demand for water now exceeds 275,000 cubic meter. The MCWD provides only over 100,000 cu meters, although it serves less than half of city households. It loses 38 percent of the water to theft and leakages.

City Hall can't afford JVC type projects. A quarter of its budget pays devaluation-bloated yen loans for Mayor Tomas Osmeña's South Reclamation Project, which is water short.

No other credible investors are around. Investments for water "waned after publicized financial losses incurred in concession contracts in Manila, Jakarta and Latin America," the Asian Development Bank notes. The ADB is convening 200 experts at the end of May to address this concern.

A consortium pullout would confirm findings by the "Philippine Cities Competitiveness" survey that among 13 metro cities, Cebu trailed at "birth its responsiveness to business needs." Davao, Makati, Marikina and Muntinlupa ranked ahead of Cebu, the Asian Institute of Management study added.

"Frogs do not drink up the pond in which they live," an old Inca proverb says. "In Cebu City, the sustainable capacity of its small (180 sq km) aquifers has been exceeded 3.6 times, and 7.4 times in Mandaue," studies by the US-AID, Delft University and ADB show.

Water tables are slumping. E-coli bacteria from human and animal waste have shut down

## VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

some wells. Others are turning brackish, a sign that salt water is seeping into emptied aquifers.

"The saline water edge has penetrated three kilometers inland," says the Water Resources Center which tracked salinization since 1973. "It is moving at the rate of 100 to 150 meters per year." Contamination now brushes against the footfalls.

Osmeña's administration "never worked it's way through to a comprehensive urban policy," the Cebu Daily News noted. "Water, garbage, land use and others remain policy black holes."

Results careened between the bizarre to pathetic. Osmeña earlier proposed a snow-fed Lake Arrowhead of California, which serves 25,000 people, as model for Cebu's tropical watershed, which serves over a million. "He reminds us of a line from Acts of the Apostles on Pentecost Sunday," the Sun Star said. "This man is not drunk, as many seem to think. It is only nine in the morning."

Ricardo Cardinal Vidal and civil society got President Fidel Ramos to issue Proclamation 1074 to correct falsified maps because Osmeña couldn't be bothered by the issue. His partisans dominate the MCWD.

The mayor stomps on dissent, compounding policy flaws. The city council is a "harem of eunuchs" unable to fiscalize. "What Osmeña wants, Osmeña gets," GMA-7 commentator Bobby Nalzaro notes.

Trapped in this policy vacuum was the draft agreement on the JVC proposal. Negotiated over three years, it was anchored to the Dublin Conference Principle that water is an "economic good." It becomes available when a "fair

return" is ensured for investors.

In the fourth year of talks, a new set of MCWD consultants scuppered the draft agreement with new demands: decrease volume delivery to 42,000 cubic meters per day, scrap joint management rights in the event of a default by the MCWD, etc. "The voice is that of Jacob, but the hands are those of Esau."

Time lost, inflation and spreading aquifer damage, meanwhile, take their toll. The new conditions result in "a return on investment lower than what was approved by government," the summary notes. So, has City Hall left this serious investor no other recourse but to pick up its marbles?

The ADB's 12-volume study "Water For All" notes that politicians all over the region try to curry favor with voters by shoving water bills below production cost. The result is less water from shoddy service. "Water utilities... cannot cover even maintenance and operational costs." It locks firms into obsolescence as "they cannot generate funds for expansion."

There is no substitute for water. So, governments must "create an environment conducive for successful public and private investment," the ADB says. The first major step: "Establish credible regulatory frameworks devoid of political interference."

Asia has successful examples in Singapore's Public Utilities Board, the Phnom Penh Water Supply Authority and Manila Water Inc., the ADB points out. In Manila, the Ayala firm expanded its coverage from 325,000 to 593,000 households, installed water taps for 138,000 indigent families, reduced costs of water by 29 percent with a reduced staff, ensured 24-hour service—and made a fair profit.

"Experience shows that a principal impediment to accessing financing for the water sector is the absence of good governance," the ADB points out. "The reverse is likewise true. Good governance can lead to increasing financial viability and consequently improving access to finance."

That's Cebu all right.

## Thank God for Theresa Pangilinan!

IF YOU'VE BEGUN TO DESPAIR ABOUT THIS country recovering its wit and grit, its moral thunder and physical courage, despair no more. Ms. Theresa Pangilinan has just shown us there's still hope for this country. Indeed, she has just shown us that Jose Rizal was right: the youth is the hope of the fatherland, or motherland, however it is called politically correctly these days.

Pangilinan, in case you don't already know (in which case your head must now be a permanent fixture of the sand from having been buried there too long), is the graduate of Cavite State University who shouted "Patalsikin si Gloria" and held up a banner that said, "No to Chachal" while GMA was delivering a speech during their graduation. She was joined by several other students before they were silenced by cops and the Presidential Security Group. "Huwag kungyung mambabastos!" Supt. Roberto Soriano ordered.

Their outburst stunned GMA who stopped talking for a while. She had just been telling the students about the importance of mastering English to land jobs in the Cavite economic zone. She subsequently recovered her composure and went on to finish her speech.

Pangilinan, the president of the Central Student Government, was later allowed to go on stage to get her diploma. She shook hands with GMA, but as the pictures on our front page showed, they studiously avoided looking at each other. GMA had a smile that looked, well, fake.

As pambabastos, or insolence, goes, Pangilinan's insolence ranks pretty close to the one Edgar Jopson showed 36 years ago (has it been that long?) when, during a visit of students to Malacañang, he asked Ferdinand Marcos to put down in writing that he would not run for office again after his second term. The infuriated Marcos ended the meeting abruptly. Jopson and company brought their case to the streets, and soon afterward a series of protests erupted. It would come to be known as the First Quarter Storm. History would show Jopson had every reason to do what he did.

## THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

Indeed, as impudence goes, Pangilinan's is nearly the same one the boy in "The Emperor's New Clothes" showed. That story tells of an emperor who agreed to wear magical clothes that only the wisest men and women in his domain could see. On the day the "clothes" were finished, by a con man masquerading as a tailor, the emperor went out to parade his apparent finery. All the spectators, who had lined up on the sides of the street and who did not wish to appear stupid, marveled loudly at the finesse and magnificence of the weave. Until the parade passed by a small boy who shouted, "The emperor is naked!" Pangilinan's shout of "Pake! Pake!" while GMA was delivering her speech were not unlike that.

Soriano is right that people should show respect for others, particularly their superiors. He is wrong to address that injunction to Pangilinan and company. Who was insulting whom in that graduation? You are Pangilinan, you will wonder too what credentials your guest speaker has to lecture you on the subject of how best to get ahead in life—the honest way. You know that you are a reasonably genuine future leader of the community while the person in front of you is an arguably fake current leader of the nation. You know that you at least won your diploma through hard work, the one thing your teachers taught you to value like life, while the person in front of you won the presidency through cheating, the one thing your teachers taught you to loathe like a plague.

Inferior and superior are tricky concepts. They have nothing to do with the trappings of the body, they have to do with the nakedness of the soul. They have nothing to do with positions of power, they have to do with conditions of being. You are Pangilinan, you will know that by all this you hold good and decent and wise, you are not your guest speaker's inferior, you are her superior. You have a right to say, "Huwag po kayang mambabastos."

Less than a month go, I wrote a column where I said that this year's graduations were occasions more for sadness than joy because of one thing. Graduations are normally a time for class valedictorians and guest speakers to talk about youthful idealism and driving oneself to excellence, about nobleness and reaching for things that lie beyond one's grasp. Not today. Today, graduates see all around them only resolute refutations of those beliefs. They see all around them only a world where mediocrity is accepted as a way of life and heroism deemed a folly, where meanness and wrongdoing are taken to be the normal course of things; and truth and justice scoffed at as an indulgence. I asked how any graduation could be held this year without its spirit clashing violently with that.

That the very source of this country's plunge into new lows of spiritual and moral abjectness should present herself as the source of inspiration for the one group of people known to resist gravity, who are the youth, well, what happened in Cavite State University was an embarrassment waiting to happen. That the one person who has taught by her example—which is the most powerful pedagogy there is; you teach by what you do, not by what you say—that the best way to get ahead in life is to cheat and the best way to not be found out is to suppress and oppress should deign to impress the one group of people who can still see when emperors are naked, well, what happened in Cavite State University was poetic justice waiting to happen.

Thank God, the kids still have the capacity to discern good and evil. Thank God, the kids still have a lot of wit and grit, light in their minds and fire in their bellies. Thank God for Theresa Pangilinan.

## OPINION

TUESDAY, APRIL 25, 2006

AB

## Nine million hits for Sigaw website

## POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan



WITH THE WHOLE WORLD BRACING FOR A new round of oil price increases in the next few weeks due to problems affecting supplies, it's lamentable that our senators seem unconcerned about it. Oil industry leaders warn that the current price of \$75 per barrel could shoot up to more than \$90 a barrel. This could wreck small economies such as ours and throw millions of our countrymen out of work but sadly, to the senators, spurred by the recent Supreme Court ruling on EO 464, this doesn't seem as important as sharpening their knives as they resume their fight against the administration when Congress reopens on May 15.

As other commentators have noted, the SC took a balanced approach in its decision on EO 464. It stressed the need for Congress to ferret information from the Executive Branch "in aid of legislation" and the people's right to information, while recognizing the President's right to invoke executive privilege in certain instances. But the reality is that the two branches are coming in from different directions. The Palace is uncomfortable with the Senate's persistent poking into controversies, while the chamber is dominated by an opposition that has not abandoned its plan to oust GMA.

What has suffered from the fierce political wrangling is the task of legislation. Pending in the Senate are 308 bills passed by the House of Representative, 20 of which are of national importance or deal with vital economic reforms. Among these are the 2006 budget, the Anti-Terrorism Bill, the rationalization of fiscal incentives, the amendments to the charter of Bangko Sentral and the reduction of income tax for low-income earners. Also pending in the Senate is the Bioethanol Fuel Bill, which seeks to speed up the development of alternative fuels and make us less dependent on oil.

The fight between the Senate and the Executive and between the two chambers of Congress is perhaps the best argument for the abolition of both chambers and the creation of a unicameral legislature. I have long supported a unicameral

chamber as the far more efficient and responsive set-up. But yesterday's Manila Standard Today gave an equally convincing reason. In a two-part series, Christine Herrera opined that senators refuse to support the proposed shift to a parliamentary system mainly because each of them stands to lose P1.2 billion in pork barrel funds, P72 million in committee funds and P12 million in travel funds. This is "apart from the millions of pesos earmarked for their offices—money that they may spend any way they like," Herrera pointed out. She said that while each House member gets P70 million for his district, each senator gets P200 million in pork barrel annually, which adds up to P2.4 billion over two terms.

Last year, Herrera said, the 23-member Senate had a total budget of P1.38 billion while the 236-member House had P2.93 billion. Divide the six laws passed last year by Congress and that would mean that each law cost the taxpayers P718 million, but had there been only one chamber the cost would have been P480 million. Herrera quoted Speaker Jose de Venecia as opining that more than six laws would surely have been enacted if we had a unicameral set-up.

I dare say public awareness of the gargantuan expense in a two-chamber set up and the stifling gridlock have been the main reasons the parliamentary/unicameral idea has made enormous headway. Sigaw ng Bayan spokesperson Raul Lambino reports a phenomenal nine million visits to the Sigaw website ([www.sigawngbayan.com](http://www.sigawngbayan.com)) since its launch less than three weeks ago. He says cybertraffic to the site is so heavy that Sigaw has had to increase its Internet servers. It's said that no other RP website can claim so many hits in such a short time

involving a single issue. Nine million represents almost 20 percent of the total number of registered voters.

Lambino said that another indication of the widespread interest in this issue is that the percentage of Filipinos who approve amending the Constitution was only slightly over 20 percent in October last year, but their number jumped to 43 percent in the latest independent survey. The number of those resisting Charter reform has steadily declined, reaching its lowest ever at 48 percent. If accurate, these figures would belie claims that people are not aware of the Cha-cha issue.

I'm not sure if it's the political weight of the eminent letter-writer or the Palace's new-found sensitivity to certain issues that worked. Former Senate President Jovino Salonga, president of Kilosbayan and adviser to Buntay Katarungan, wrote Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita earlier this month, reiterating the two NGOs' determination to file a petition in the Supreme Court against Small Town Lottery in case the government refused to "cease and desist from carrying out (this) illegal and immoral scheme on a nationwide basis." Salonga cited the argument of Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno and the PSCO that STL is being conducted to wipe out jittering, which means that the government itself would operate gambling nationwide. Recalling how President Corazon Aquino abandoned STL as a "failed experiment," Salonga said it was a crime against public morals punishable under the Revised Penal Code, and condemnable since the masses would bear the brunt of subsidizing its operations and the government would be perpetrating the offense.

A week later, Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor wrote Salonga to "please be advised that we are conducting a careful study of the issues and concerns you raised in your letter." Defensor assured that "we welcome dialogue with affected sectors and stakeholders."

Salonga reads this as the Palace's way of stopping STL. Indeed, it has nothing to gain from STL but the erosion of our people's morals.

## Enjoy the gift!

## AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David



AS SO OFTEN HAPPENS IN COLUMN-WRITING, what I initially thought was a brief, hurried comment on a magazine spread featuring six "ordinary" women posing in the nude generated so many reactions—generally favorable—that even I was taken aback.

What readers mostly reacted to, though, was not the pictorial, but what I wrote about aging—specifically how looks and physical desirability cease to matter (or rather, matter as much) to a woman as she gets older.

Of course, who wouldn't want to be in the shoes of Francesca Annis, 61, until very recently the significant other of actor Ralph Fiennes, 43. Who wouldn't want to be squirmed around by one of the best-looking actors in the biz, an actor of sprawling fire and electrical intensity? But the trouble with pairing off with a hunk is the pressure to be a babe yourself, and at 61, Francesca, a good-looking woman judging by her pictures, must have found babe-hood an increasingly elusive and tiresome occupation.

Most women, by the time they near or overtake Francesca's age are mostly content with the older (balding, paunchy, low-bar) men they married, or happy with the life they have carved out for themselves, alone or with a partner.

And most women, it turns out, realize sooner or later that taut skin, firm muscles and perky breasts are a small price to pay for earning the body, the confidence, the fearlessness and the experience you gain as time marches on.

MY FRIEND Mila Alora sent the following piece in reaction to that column on ageing. Because it was merely forwarded to me, I have no way of discovering its provenance, and so must attribute it to an "anonymous" author. Still, I am grateful to this unnamed woman who shares her thoughts on the perks that come with the "gift" that is old age, or even just late middle age. In a world where women come under relentless fire and endless exhortations to lubricate, moisturize, cleanse, tone and stretch the physical shell, it feels good to encounter a piece like this that tells us it's all right to finally let go, to relax the vigilance and simply BE.

"Maybe what I really want more than 'grow-

ing old gracefully' is just to be authentic," writes Gilda Cordero Fernando in her essay "Goodness gracious!" (from "The Last Full Moon: Lessons on My Life"). "Maybe that was what I was searching for all my life. The courage to be me. Not someone I'm supposed to be, or psych myself to be—not the accepted model of propriety in pink linen slacks and a signature handbag. I can't live imprisoned in someone's idea of a fashionable home. I need to fly, to dance a storm, to taste the sky! And like the favorite song of the karaoke bars that its singers get shot for, maybe it's okay if I did it my way."

Doing it your way—growing old without apologies and with the sweet aftertaste of dessert on your tongue. Now that's a recipe for wonderful ageing!

THE OTHER day a young person asked me how I felt about being old. I was taken aback, for I do not think of myself as old. Upon seeing my reaction, he was immediately embarrassed, but I explained that it was an interesting question, and I would ponder it and let him know.

Old age, I decided, is a gift.

I am now, probably for the first time in my life, the person I have always wanted to be. Oh, not my body! I sometimes despair over my body—the wrinkles, the baggy eyes, and the sagging butt. And often I am taken aback by that old person that lives in my mirror, but I don't agonize over those things for long.

I would never trade my amazing friends, my wonderful life, my loving family for less gray hair or a flatter belly. As I've aged, I've become more kind to myself, and less critical of myself. I've become my own friend. I don't chide myself for eating that extra cookie, or for not making

my bed, or for buying that silly cement gecko that I didn't need but looks so avant garde on my patio. I am entitled to overeat, to be messy, to be extravagant. I have seen too many dear friends leave this world too soon, before they understood the great freedom that comes with aging.

Whose business is it if I choose to read or play on the computer until 4 a.m. and sleep until noon?

I WILL dance with myself to those wonderful tunes of the 1960s, and if I, at the same time, wish to weep over a lost love, I will.

I will walk the beach in a swim suit that is stretched over a bulging body and will dive into the waves with abandon if I choose to, despite the pitying glances from the bikini set. They, too, will get old.

I know I am sometimes forgetful. But then again, some of life is just as well forgotten. And I eventually remember the important things.

Sure, over the years my heart has been broken. How can your heart not break when you lose a loved one, or when a child suffers, or even when a beloved pet gets hit by a car?

But broken hearts are what give us strength and understanding and compassion. A heart never broken is pristine and sterile and will never know the joy of being imperfect.

I am so blessed to have lived long enough to have my hair turn gray, and to have my youthful laughs be forever etched into deep grooves on my face. So many have never laughed, and so many have died before their hair could turn silver. I can say "no" and mean it. I can say "yes" and mean it.

As you get older, it is easier to be positive. You care less about what other people think. I don't question myself anymore. I've even earned the right to be wrong.

So, to answer your question: I like being old. It has set me free.

I like the person I have become.

I am not going to live forever, but while I am still here, I will not waste time lamenting what could have been, or worrying about what will be. And I shall eat dessert every single day.

## Italy returns to political paralysis

## WORLD VIEW

Guido Tabellini



not guarantee an equally safe majority in the Senate. As a result, Prodi has won a large margin in the lower house, but he has only a handful of extra votes in the Senate. Given Italy's almost perfect bicameralism, this means that the new government will find it very difficult to function even under ideal circumstances.

But Italy's circumstances are far from ideal. The new government will face formidable challenges. The budget deficit is again out of control, and well over the 3-percent-of-GDP Maastricht ceiling. The aging population is straining the public pension and healthcare systems beyond sustainability. The manufacturing sector, squeezed by stagnating productivity and competition from China and other low-cost producers, is no longer competitive. Many services remain inefficient, because they are either in the domain of an archaic public administration or enjoy monopoly rents created by regulatory barriers.

Inaction is simply not an option for the new government. And yet agreement on virtually everything of significance will be very difficult to reach. Prodi's left-wing L'Unione coalition comprises a hodge-podge of parties spread all over the political spectrum, ranging from staunch communists to former liberals (with communists stronger than in the previous election). Under the new electoral system, all of these parties will be competing with each other for the same votes, and each one will seek to protect its own constituency or claim credit for whatever is accomplished. Given L'Unione's razor-thin majority in the upper house, the most likely outcome is paralysis.

As if this was not enough, Prodi will face another problem. Just before stepping down, Berlusconi's government also approved a constitutional reform that, among other things, provides a logical complement to the new electoral system. In particular, the new constitution strengthens the powers of the prime minister and enables him to call early elections in the event of a government crisis. This provision would be an important weapon in Prodi's hands. But the left-wing parties that support him have already announced that they will block the constitutional reform, which they opposed for other reasons. Hence, Prodi will almost certainly be deprived of his best tool for imposing discipline on his unruly coalition.

What is likely to happen when a large and heterogeneous coalition with barely a parliamentary majority must govern in an increasingly dire economic situation? The answer is almost obvious: either the government will collapse, or it will seek to poach supporters from opposition parties. Which of these two outcomes will materialize also depends on what happens inside Berlusconi's camp, and that is less easy to predict.

But, either way, the bipolar political system to which Italians were getting accustomed is unlikely to survive unscathed. The left-right divide will become easier for opportunistic politicians to cross, and perhaps a new centrist party will emerge. As a result, Italy will soon return to its older tradition of short-lived governments and unstable coalitions.

Of course, Prodi could preserve a bipolar political system—and thus increase the longevity of his government—by either restoring a majoritarian electoral system or pressing ahead with other constitutional amendments designed to preserve government and coalition stability. But forcing such changes on his coalition partners could be as difficult for Prodi as tackling Italy's daunting economic problems.

## Unexpected eulogy

IT WAS ALREADY THE WEE HOURS OF THE MORNING OF April 3, and I was still up, chatting with friends on the Internet. I don't know why, but for some reason, a friend and I were talking about wakes and funerals. We were going over where we would want our wake to be, what song would be playing in the background, who we think would visit, who we think would deliver a eulogy for us. It was a long conversation revolving around ourselves and how we wanted to be remembered, but in the end we shared one insight: we would be touched and eternally grateful if someone we least expected to speak went up the podium, reached for the microphone and delivered some kind words about us. Wouldn't it be wonderful to know that, unknowingly, we had touched someone's life?

## YOUNG BLOOD

Fatima Avila

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

Right after I pressed the enter key to end that statement, my cell phone rang, and I was told that a high school batchmate of mine had shot himself in the head just a couple of minutes earlier.

Words cannot express what I was feeling. Shock, disbelief, bewilderment—all were raging inside me. It couldn't be true. It just couldn't. It was my best friend who called, and we had a history of pulling pranks on each other, so even after she said it, I still left room for the possibility that it was not so.

But it was true. Robert was dead. And we all had to accept the fact, however difficult it might be. And it was very difficult.

Late into the morning, my best friend was still spreading the news about Robert's death through text. They were close family friends, and that was the task assigned to her. It was a simple text informing the recipients of his passing and details about the wake, and requesting for prayers for him and the family he left behind.

His mother was a widow. His brother blamed himself totally because the gun that Robert used was his. It's always hard for family when a member dies, but given the circumstances, Robert's death was infinitely harder for his mother and brother.

In high school, Robert wasn't the kind of student who was called up to the stage during recognition day to receive an academic award. He wasn't a jock, and had very few extracurricular activities. He made a couple of imprudent decisions, got hooked on a vice or two, and repeated junior year. From what I heard from my best friend, he wasn't really close to his family either. In other words, he wasn't perfect. Just like each and every one of us.

I didn't know Robert well. He was just an acquaintance, a family friend of my best friend, an ex-boyfriend's kurbakoda in the old days, a familiar face I used to see every day along the hallway of our high school. So I can't explain why I am greatly affected and bothered by his death. Maybe it's the manner in which he died, maybe it's the mystery behind it (he didn't leave a note), or maybe it's just the waste of life.

He shouldn't have died. He shouldn't have died. That's what I think over and over again. No one so young should die. He only lived a quarter of his life, and did not even reach his prime. He should have been in college, doing what me and our other batch mates are doing: living and enjoying our lives.

But life's not fair. We should deal with it with acceptance, not bitterness, a friend told me. And she's right. Robert's dying wasn't fair to his family, to his friends and even to him, but there are things that are beyond our control and we should accept that. As priests are quick to say, "We should see death for what it really is: the end of poverty and the beginning of riches, the end of fear and the beginning of tranquility, the end of pain and the beginning of strength."

As for Robert, we should remember him not because of his imperfections but because of all the beautiful years he shared with the people around him. He wasn't the perfect student, but he was a thoughtful and caring friend. He wasn't close to his family, but he loved them and they loved him greatly in return. Closeness is a relative term anyway, while love is absolute.

One last thing. Why was I up at past 2 a.m. last April 3? Why was I chatting? Why was that particular friend who asks weird questions online, too? Why were we talking about funerals of all the many weird things to talk about? Why did my best friend call the second after I had pressed the enter key? It's weird, really weird, but somehow rather enlightening.

Exactly two weeks after his death, I suddenly have an epiphany: Because we were talking about funerals, my friend and I came up with a shared insight. And because of that insight, I'm writing this essay. I am probably the last person anyone would expect to speak about him. But somehow, I feel I owe this to Robert.

Fatima Avila, 19, is a legal management junior at the Ateneo de Manila University.

## NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to [youngblood@inquirer.com.ph](mailto:youngblood@inquirer.com.ph) together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

## THEY SAID

## Alien problem

"Being beautiful is not a problem for me in my work. My problem is my name—Jovovich! People say, 'Oh it's a foreign sounding name, let's make her an alien!'"—Hollywood actress Mila Jovovich

## Truth in acting

"I told him that an actor's job involves the quest for truth. It was my task to open up his mind."—Acting coach Soliman Cruz on teen actor Nathan Lopez, winner of an International acting award for his portrayal of a young, flamboyant gay boy, a role Lopez initially resisted

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## Dissent has value

WHENEVER A MAJORITY RULES and makes a social decision, such as by electing a president, it constrains or expands the set of choices that would be available to future generations. This in itself is neither good nor bad. But when the same majority suppresses dissent, there is always the risk that future generations would be deprived of those viewpoints that might prove useful in their search for remedies to the bad, if unintended, consequences of the decisions of their ancestors. Dissenting Supreme Court justices have the consolation of having their views taken down for posterity. Dissenting citizens must not have their posters torn down.

Can democracy exist, survive, or flourish without dissent? This is an old question to which the old—and eternal—answer is "No."

Remove dissent, that is, suppress dissenters—by beating, jailing, torturing, or shooting them, or by branding them with the code

words "communist," "enemy of the state," or "destabilizer," thereby cowing them or chasing them to the slaughter—and what vanishes is democracy itself. What remains—the detritus of dissent dispersed—can never give rise to democracy. Can democracy be founded on crumpled placards and pamphlets, torn flags and shirts, cracked skulls and broken limbs?

Is democracy made of tear gas fumes?

Barricading the munisipyo, city hall or kapitolyo is a time-honored pastime for Filipino politicians and their hangers-on whenever the canvassing of electoral votes is about to end, or whenever an incumbent public official is declared by election arbiters to have legally, if not actually, lost the election.

We may charitably call these barricades expressions of dissent. But it is dissent against mere electoral outcomes. What we need is dissent against our electoral processes, expressed in the hope that an im-

proved method of choosing our leaders will lead to better choices.

Most democracies subscribe to Majority Rule as a way to arriving at reasonable decisions. But Majority Rule is also Dissent Overruled. In a democracy it should never be Dissent Penalized.

Democracy is a centrifuge that turns viscous opinions into social decisions. Dissent is sometimes needed to help clarify such decisions.

Our centrifuge failed to produce an unadulterated electoral decision in 2004. Dissenters are protesting against this lack of clarity, and are asking that we proceed to repair a necessary but defective social device. To suppress this dissent by whipping an entire society is vicious. It is to beat an egg (some of whose whites have expressed a desire to be unb burdened of a broken yolk) to submission.

—JOSELITO B. SAN JOSÉ,  
100 Esteban Abada St.,  
Loyola Heights, Quezon City

Doctors, therefore, have less time to recover their investment and to save enough money for their retirement needs.

Second,

the government cannot guarantee the safety of medical workers in far-flung areas, especially where communist or Muslim insurgents have a strong presence.

Recently, the INQUIRER carried a news story about a military detachment overrun by NPA (New People's Army) rebels. If soldiers can't protect their camps, can civilians do better to protect themselves?

Third, more important than receiving medical care is the quality of health care that is being given. What kind of service does the gov-

ernment expect to provide the sick if those who are to provide it are forced to do so? Only volunteers who genuinely want to render medical service in difficult areas would be able to provide quality medical care.

Finally, mandatory service will reduce the desirability of the medical profession, thereby reducing the number of Filipinos opting for a career in medicine or nursing. In the long run, this will reduce the supply of healthcare workers in the country, and we will be faced with problems graver than what we are facing now.

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# Across the NATION

Text on your feedback: Inquirer atm name/globe/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 263 (Smart). Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

# 40 judges, court workers suspended

**CANDABA, PAMPANGA**—MORE THAN 40 JUDGES and court personnel have been suspended, fined or reprimanded for various offenses since December last year, Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban said here on Sunday.

"We have decided cases against judges and court personnel at a rate of about eight per month or more," he said of the Supreme Court's pace in weeding out corruption and incompetence in the judiciary.

This reform was continuing, with Panganiban saying he wanted to see a judiciary characterized by independence, integrity, industry and intelligence.

"That is our target for the judiciary," he added, pointing out

that reforms were being carried out along "Aacid," his acronym for addressing the issues of access to justice by the poor, corruption, incompetence and delay in the delivery of justice.

"I'd like to be able to solve these problems, to give priority to the solution of these problems," he said.

A survey on the country's legal system conducted by the Social Weather Stations in August last year showed that 49 percent of 440 lawyers in Metro Manila, Baguio, Cebu and Davao cities said they

were "aware" of judges in their localities who were on the take. The SWS said only 8 percent of those lawyers reported the bribery.

During the five-year stint of former Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., the Supreme Court had disciplined a number of justices and dismissed 47 judges and one justice.

Davide did this even as more than 30 percent of trial courts in the country remained vacant as of September 2005.

Since replacing Davide in December, Panganiban has adopted

reforms that include the creation of five new committees on judiciary development fund, administrative concerns, attaining zero backlog of cases, knowledge-sharing and regional cooperation, and security, according to a Supreme Court report.

Court officials and employees nationwide have received financial benefits ranging from special allowances, fringe benefits, cost-of-living allowances, emergency economic assistance and productivity bonus.

The judicial philosophy of pro-

tection liberty and nurturing prosperity were upheld in decisions that included shooting down the increase in generation charge by the Manila Electric Co., ordering the Government Service Insurance System to refund to its retirees all deductions made from their retirement benefits and upholding the right of the Philippine International Air Terminal Co. to be paid P300 billion before the government could take over the Ninoy Aquino International Airport's Terminal 3. Tonette Oreyas, PDI Central Luzon Desk



## BIR exec fears kidnap over tag he's worth P20M

**COTABATO CITY**—A REGIONAL REVENUE official fears for his life as he might be kidnapped after the Department of Finance Revenue Integrity Protection Service (RIPS) declared him worth P20 million.

He cried foul on allegations that he enriched himself while working at the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

Lawyer Mama Marzoc, director of the regional office of the BIR here, said he was surprised after learning he was that rich before the eyes of the RIPS.

"I fear for my life and my family and my children, they might be kidnapped because the newspapers say I am worth P20 million," he said.

"I admit that I have (pieces of) real (estate) properties but these would not go beyond P2.8 million as stated in my statement of assets and liabilities," Marzoc told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

"I don't have a house in Barrio Kakar, Cotabato City," Marzoc, who has been in government service for 39 years, added.

"I told my wife, after reading the news, that we should go to Kakar because we have a house there, according to RIPS. If anyone could find a mansion in Kakar owned by me then they can claim and assume ownership over it," he said.

Marzoc's wife works with the National Food Authority.

He stressed that his house in Marawi City was owned by his parents and contributed to its renovation, along with his brothers who are engineers and doctors and another brother working in Saudi Arabia.

"I consider this trial by publicity, my side was not aired" he said, adding that he has one and only wife.

Some report says he has many wives. "My wife is a Christian and an Ilongga, she would not allow me to marry more than her."

Admitting he owns an apartment, Marzoc said it was loaned from the Government Service Insurance System and he has all the records needed to prove his innocence of the charges filed against him at the Office of the Ombudsman.

"I have not received copies of the complaint yet," he said.

Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau

## Cebu bus rates up P1 on May 1

By Jhunnex Napallagan  
PDI Visayas Bureau

**CEBU CITY**—STARTING MAY 1, BUS FARES in Cebu will increase by P1 per kilometer.

The Cebu Provincial Bus Operators Association (CPBOA) will implement the P1 per km fare hike to offset the series of increases in the prices of gasoline and diesel, according to CPBOA president Nick Villahermosa.

Villahermosa said they would no longer need to petition the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) for the increase since they never implemented the P1.10 per km fare increase approved last year by the LTFRB.

The militant transport group Nagkakiblang Draybers sa Sugbo (Nadsu), which is composed of about 7,000 jeepney operators and drivers, will, however, file a petition at the LTFRB for a fare increase.

# LET THE NUMBERS SPEAK

## It's time to move forward

### OPINION ON THE STATEMENT:

**"The members of the opposition against President Arroyo should start helping to improve the country and stop too much politics"**

**AGREE:**

**58%**

**UNDECIDED:**

**29%**

**DISAGREE:**

**13%**

\* Don't know and refused to answer not shown

\* First Quarter Social Weather Report  
March 8-14, 2006 National Survey

**THE SURVEY SAYS** majority of Filipinos believe that the opposition should stop excessive politics and start helping the country move forward.

**"Their (the people's) most immediate concern and urgent priority is their daily struggle to earn a livelihood... They are seriously concerned that in 2006 we shall repeat the chaotic politics we all suffered in 2005" CBCP January 29, 2006**

### OPINION ON THE STATEMENT:

**"Whatever happened in the elections is over and it is time to move on and let the President focus on the real problems of the nation"**

**AGREE:**

**51%**

**UNDECIDED:**

**29%**

**DISAGREE:**

**20%**

\* Don't know and refused to answer not shown

\* First Quarter Social Weather Report  
March 8-14, 2006 National Survey

**THE SURVEY SAYS** majority of Filipinos believe that we should leave election issues behind, MOVE ON, and let the President address the nation's problems.

**"We did not see enough anomalies at the national level to have a material effect in the national results" NAMFREL May 2004**

**Magtulungan tayo. Kaunlaran muna.**

Philippine Information Agency



# SC woes on reforms: Budget, judges lack

By Delmar Carino  
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—THE SUPREME COURT IS DETERMINED to reform the judiciary to improve the delivery of justice but its programs are hampered by budget constraints and vacancies in various judicial positions, a justice said here on Monday.

Associate Justice Leonardo Quisumbing said the court's human and resource problems had adversely affected its institutional, administrative and justice delivery measures.

The Supreme Court started in 2000 a program for judicial reforms aimed at providing a speedier and efficient judicial system.

"The judiciary's budget is less than 1 percent of the national budget," Quisumbing told reporters attending a seminar on the country's judicial system at the Baguio Country Club.

"We hope that the budget will increase to 2

or reach 3 percent of the national budget," he said.

Records from the High Court's program management office showed that the judiciary's budget had been declining for the last five years.

In 2004 and 2005, the courts received only 0.88 percent of the national budget compared to close to 40 percent of the Executive department.

Translated into per-capita share, the figures indicated that the government had been investing less on the judicial department.

Court records showed 2,258 judicial positions in the Supreme Court down to the municipal trial courts, including the sharia courts for Muslims. Only 1,583 had been filled up, creating a need for 665 judges more or a vacancy rate of 29 percent.

The 1,583 judges and justices serve 82.7 million Filipinos, or a ratio of one judge for every 54,587 Filipinos, the records said.



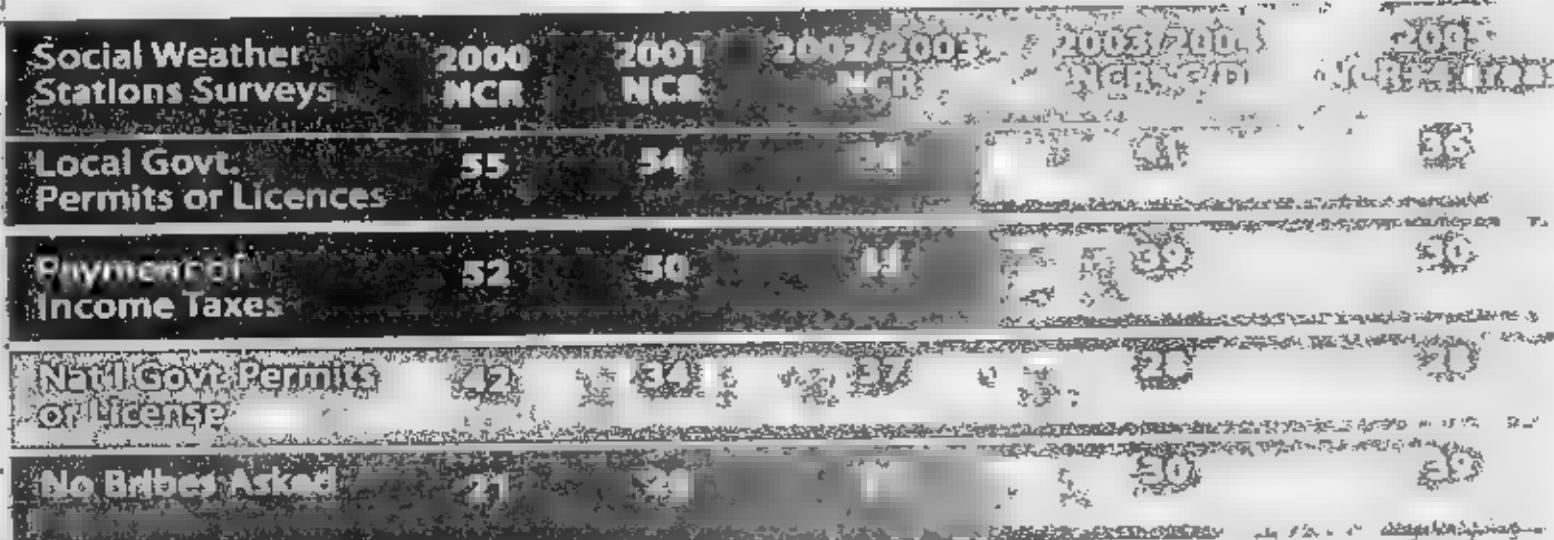
DENNIS JAY SANTOS/PIA DILAWA BUREAU

Thousands of Christian youth converged recently in Davao City for the Youth for Christ International leaders' convention. Part of the convention was the performance of these young men and women with painted faces and bodies.

## LET THE NUMBERS SPEAK

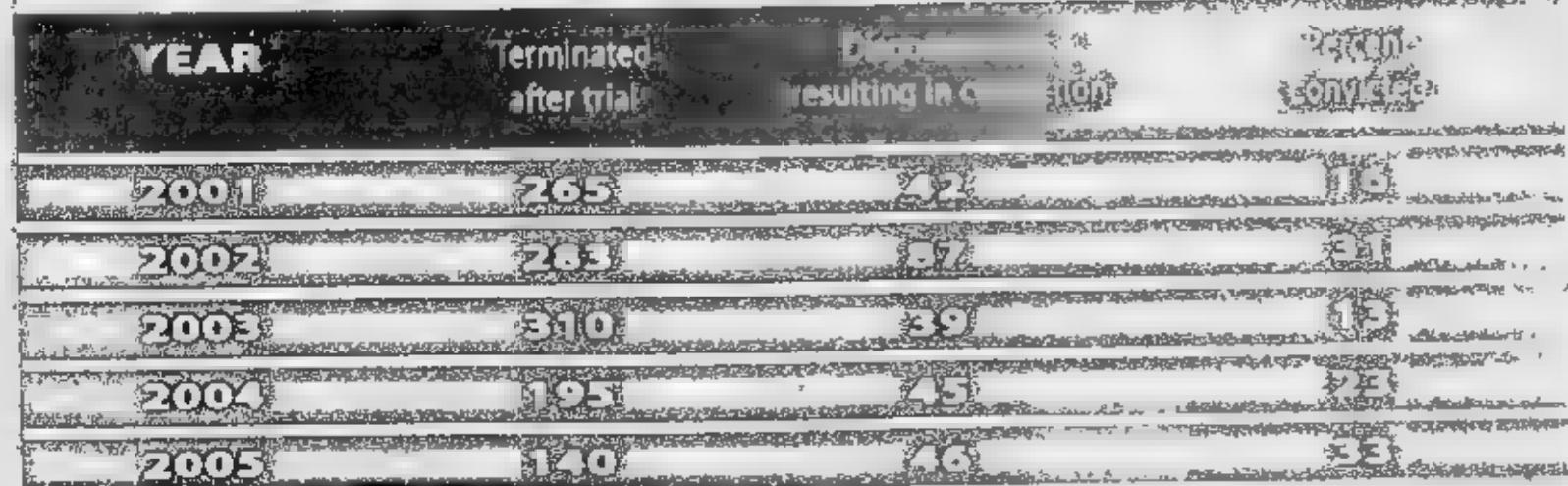
### We are winning the war against corruption

#### PERCENTAGE OF COMPANIES THAT WERE ASKED FOR BRIBES for government transactions



In 2005, fewer companies were asked for bribes to facilitate transactions.  
This is a clear indication that corruption is declining.

#### OMBUDSMAN CONVICTION RATE AT THE SANDIGANBAYAN



In 2005, 33% of cases decided in the Sandiganbayan were won by the Ombudsman. Only 16% were won in 2001. This reflects gains in the war against corruption.

**Magtulungan tayo. Kaunlaran muna.**

Philippine Information Agency



#### ROUNDUP

##### Halcon climb moratorium

CITY OF CALAPAN—A five-year moratorium in climbing Mt. Halcon is being observed after Barangay Dulangan, a Mangyan community, passed a resolution in March for the purpose. Hundreds of mountaineers used to climb Halcon, the third highest peak in the country, especially during the Holy Week. Only two foreigners, assisted by a Mangyan, have been reported to have violated the moratorium, according to Karen Ignacio, provincial officer of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples.



Madonna Virata, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

##### Community archeology

BULALACAO, Oriental Mindoro—The archeology studies program of the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City is conducting an excavation in Barangay Caralaw, 3 km from the town proper, up to May 8 to determine whether what people here believe to be a Church (called Simbahang Bato) was really a place of worship. The research is being conducted by Dr. Paz Victor and 18 students and staff members.

Felipe Celino, PDI Visayas Bureau

##### Village exec suspended

ROXAS CITY—The president of the Association of Barangay Councils of Sigma town in Capiz was suspended for habitual absenteeism during the weekly municipal council sessions. The municipal council suspended Christopher Andaya for a month without pay in March, said Vice Mayor Lormual de Pedro. De Pedro, the council's presiding officer, said Andaya, who represents the barangay association in the town council, attended only four sessions last year and was absent since January. He said Andaya, the barangay chair of Poblacion Sur and ironically the head of the town council's committee on good government, did not file any leave of absence.



Felipe Celino, PDI Visayas Bureau

##### Jeep with hot logs stopped

LEGAZPI CITY—A jeep marked "Two Brothers" and carrying 115 logs worth at least P18,000 was seized by police on Friday while on its way from Barangay Matanglad to Barangay Calachucan in M. Ilogos, Masbate. The driver of the jeep was identified as Arturo Arado, 37, while the alleged owner of the logs was identified only as Renato Blanca, of Barangay Matanglad.

Ephraim Aguilar, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

##### NPA mission: More guns

LUCENA CITY—Communist spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal congratulated New People's Army rebels who raided the outpost of government militiamen in Obando, Bulacan on Friday and seized at least 17 high-powered weapons and ammunitions. "Their successful offensive against the enemy was one shining example for all the Red fighters to emulate across the country," Rosal said in a mobile phone interview. He urged all communist rebels to step up attacks and collect more firearms for the resource-depleted guerrilla movement.

Dalio Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

##### Calabarzon inflation up

LIPA CITY—The inflation rate, or the rate of increase in prices of goods and services, in the Calabarzon region was higher in March compared to the previous month's level as it reached 7 percent, data from the National Statistics Office regional office said. Rizal recorded the highest inflation rate in March at 10 percent, while Cavite had the lowest at 4.7 percent. The NSO saw the country's economic policies, particularly the imposition of the expanded value-added tax, as influential to the March inflation increases.

Marlon Alexander Lutstra, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

TUESDAY, APRIL 25, 2006

## Across the NATION

A7

## Negros farmer leader executed in his home

By Carla P. Gomez  
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—ANOTHER LEADER OF A farmers' group was killed, this time in Barangay Camansi in Kabankalan City, Negros Occidental, by three unidentified armed men on Saturday.

The slaying came exactly a week after a community organizer of the Task Force Malpal was gunned down in Silay City, Negros Occidental.

The latest victim was identified as Porferio Maglasang, a father of eight and chair of the Pambansang Katipunan ng Makabayang Magbubukid (PKMM) chapter in Kabankalan.

Supt. Roderick Alba, Kabankalan police chief, yesterday said Maglasang was forcibly taken from his house and shot in his backyard in Sitio Caraan, Barangay Camansi.

Alba said Maglasang died of multiple bullet wounds in different parts of the body.

The Kitulan para sa Pambansang Demokrasya-Negros, in a statement, condemned the killing of the PKMM leader.

It said Maglasang was a victim of extrajudicial killings sanctioned by the military here and demanded an investigation by authorities.

It asked the local government units in the province to put a stop to the series of human rights violations.

Police have also yet to establish the identities of the gunmen who killed TF leader Ricardo Adeva in Silay.

Adeva, 39, was shot on April 16 by four men in Barangay Bagtig. He had multiple bullet wounds—four in the head and one each in the abdomen, right side of the chest, mouth and left ear, waist and right hand.



DENNIS JAY SANTOS/PI Mindanao Bureau

## UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

A hawksbill turtle climbs up a concrete divider, drawing close to a photographer's camera in Punta Dumanag, a coastal village in Davao City that is promoting a program to protect the endangered turtle species.

## GenSan dads say peace ad hurting city

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—THE CITY COUNCIL passed a resolution urging the Department of Tourism to help investigate the origin of an advertisement titled "Call for Peace" being aired in major TV and radio stations in the country and published in newspapers here.

The resolution, unanimously approved by the council, assailed the ad campaign, claiming it was destroying the image of the city.

An excerpt of the ad said, "Precious (Galo) collected lots of happy memories. However, terrorists wrote off this young girl's life when they bombed the General Santos market in December 2004. Fourteen were killed, including Precious. Help fight terrorism. Call for Peace, dial 117 or 1800107392737 or contact your barangay representative. All identities will remain confidential."

Councilor Ramon Milleza said the advertiser should immediately pull out the ad and rephrase it so as not to put the city in a bad light.

Milleza added that the intention of the peace campaign might be noble but the advertiser should have been sensitive to the feelings of the blast victims.

"Why single out General Santos in the ad campaign when several other areas in the country have also experienced a series of bomb attacks?" Milleza asked.

Councilor Shirllyn Nograles, chair of the council tourism committee, said she understood that the ad campaign was meant to motivate people to be vigilant against terror attacks.

Nograles said the advertiser should have reviewed the text of the ad to ensure it was not damaging to any place.

Mayor Pedro Acharon Jr. said he called up the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace Process to find out where the peace ad came from.

But Acharon said even the OPAPP was not aware who prepared and paid for the ad.

Jesus Dureza, presidential assistant for Mindanao, said his office had nothing to do with it.

Aquiles Zonia, PDI Mindanao Bureau

## 10 rebels attacking militia base slain

By Carla P. Gomez  
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—TEN REBELS AND A PARAMILITARY man were killed while three others were injured when communist guerrillas stormed a government militia base in Guihuligan, Negros Oriental on Saturday.

Col. Jerry Jalandoni, commander of the 303rd Infantry Brigade based on Negros Island, said soldiers found the bodies of two rebels but knew that at least 10 died among some 30 New People's Army members who raided a detachment of the Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Unit (Cafgu) in Barangay Villegas.

The number of fatalities could not be independently verified as of yesterday.

Jalandoni identified the bodies recovered as those of Demetrio Cornejo and Ruben Rabor.

He said the other dead rebels were loaded in carabao-drawn carts by their comrades. The group was sighted in Barangay Trinidad, also in Guihuligan.

Also killed in the two-hour battle were Cafgu member Raniel Garsia. Another member Ricardo Salapas was slightly wounded.

Two wounded rebels, identified only as Ranila and Alfredo Malig-on, were brought to the Villegas District Hospital in Guihuligan.

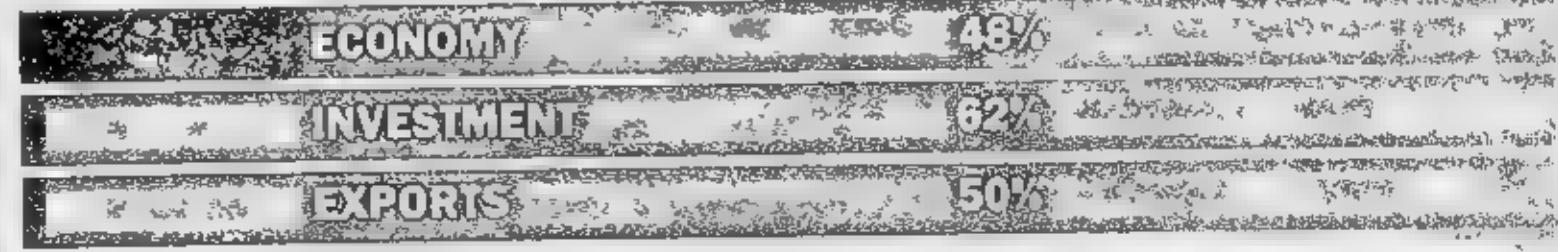
The military said the militiamen were outnumbered but were able to put up a good fight.

The Army said the attack could be an attempt to avenge NPA losses suffered during a March 31 encounter in Isabela town near Guihuligan, where government forces overran a guerrilla training camp.

LET THE NUMBERS SPEAK  
Our economy is on the upswing

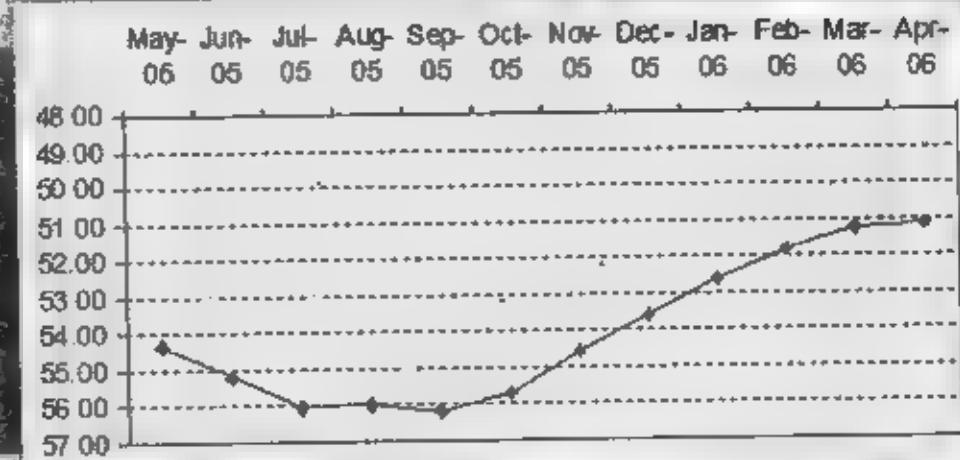
## MAKATI BUSINESS CLUB SURVEY - JAN. 2006

Respondents who expect growth in:



"This economy is worth investing in" - Makati Business Club

DRAMATIC  
GAINS  
OF THE PESO  
AGAINST  
THE DOLLAR



## ECONOMIC GAINS

- ✓ Foreign direct investments in 2005 grew by more than 65% compared to year-ago levels. Philippine Export Zone Authority (PEZA) investments alone grew to P68 Billion from P50 billion in 2004. PEZA investments are expected to generate over 70,000 jobs
- ✓ Balance Of Payments (BOP) surplus posted at \$2.03 Billion in the first two months of the year, three times higher than the same period last year
- ✓ International financial institutions such as ING Bank, UBS AG, Goldman Sachs remain bullish on the Peso projecting further increase in its value
- ✓ UK-based Fitch and US-based Standard & Poor upgraded their credit risk ratings of the Philippines from "negative" to "stable"
- ✓ The World Bank, Merrill-Lynch, Bear Stearns & Co. and ABN-AMRO retain positive growth outlooks for the country forecasting economic growth of between 5.4% and 6% this year
- ✓ United Nations awarded the Philippines as the best implementor of microfinancing besting 160 other countries
- ✓ OFW remittances increased to \$1.8 Billion in the first two months of 2006, higher by 14% compared to year-ago levels. This continues to pump-prime the economy and provide a better quality of life for OFW families
- ✓ Jan. to March 2006 budget deficit is P4.2 Billion below ceiling
- ✓ Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) jobs, like call center agents, increased by 63% in 2005 from year-ago levels to about 162,250 jobs
- ✓ The President's job generation program is nearly half-way to its goal of 10 million jobs by year 2010. As of Dec. 2005, 4.9 million jobs have been generated

Magtulungan tayo. Kaunlaran muna

Philippine Information Agency







# Drug den uncovered inside Manila cemetery

## House equipped with 3 surveillance cameras; 200 grams of shabu seized

By Margaux C. Ortiz

POLICE RAIDED A HOUSE THAT WAS ALLEGEDLY being used as a drug den inside a Manila cemetery early yesterday morning, and seized P400,000 worth of methamphetamine hydrochloride or shabu.

Supt. Romulo Sapitula, Manila Police District Station 3 chief, said the suspected house owners—identified only as Boy Zapata and his nephew Bong—were able to escape from the raiders.

"The house was equipped with three surveillance cameras so the two were able to flee before we could enter the area," Sapitula said in a phone interview.

Five other suspects found inside the house on 29th Street, North Cemetery in the Sta. Cruz area, were arrested and will be charged with violation of the Comprehensive Drugs Act of 2002, he added. They were identified as Mansa Ranoco, Rebecca Zapata, Anna May Zapata, Randy Sabado and a 16-year-old girl.

Sapitula said his men were able to seize 200 grams of shabu, with an estimated street value of P2,000 per gram. He added that the police also had to use acetylene torches in breaking down the steel doors of the house.

"It was a well-fortified house, even if it was illegally constructed inside a cemetery," Sapitula said, adding that part of the residence even encroached on a portion of the nearby La Loma Cemetery. The MPD official said that apart from the surveillance cameras, the house was also fully air-conditioned.

MPD operatives had also uncovered a drug den with a similar setup in Quiapo, Manila, late last month. Like the house in Sta. Cruz, the house on Fraternal Street in Quiapo was also equipped with a surveillance camera.

Police seized shabu with an estimated street value of P7.5 million from the two-story house.



### MAKING FRIENDS

West Australian Police Constable Sacha Howlett gives a policeman stationed in Kamuning, Quezon City a souvenir. Howlett was a participant in a group study exchange program organized by Rotary International.

RAFFY LERMA

## Shame on those school officials!

### ON TARGET

Ramon  
Tulfo



However, all efforts must be exerted to get the innocent implicated in the killings out of Saudi prisons.

I heard that Saudi prison is the worst place to be in. From accounts of Pinoy who have been jailed in Saudi, many guards are reportedly homosexuals who sodomize prisoners who don't sport beard or moustaches.

Deo R. Alberca, who introduced himself as vice president of the Chamber of Customs Brokerage Inc. (CCBI)-Cebu, wrote in the Opinion page that I used the power of the pen "blatantly to malign or serve selfish interests."

He said that in reply to my write-up about Cebu Customs Port Collector Lourdes Mangaaoang who refuses to vacate her post despite an order from her superiors in Manila.

transferring her to Ilido. Alberca is, of course, kowtowing to Mangaaoang as he is a broker. My customs sources in Manila and Cebu say Alberca is a broker for notorious rice smugglers in Cebu.

No further comment.

\*\*\*

A book on self-defense is out. The book, Counter Strike, is meant for the B and C people (as opposed to A, D and E) as they are the most productive social classes in society, says its author, Frenchman John Havan.

The white-collar classes need a system that is simple, direct and easy to learn. They need to avoid anything that will lead to a fight with a toughie.

They need to cut an attacker down with simple movements that can be learned in a few minutes," said Havan, who's an expert in Japanese aikido, Korean taekwondo and Thailand kickboxing.

Havan was also a three-time All-Vietnam champion in his prime during the Vietnam war.

I highly urge you buy the book and study under Havan. The lessons are very

I should know. I am his student.

## Name Makati's adopted herons and win a prize

By Terri V. Quismundo

THE MAKATI CITY GOVERNMENT IS looking for names for its newest residents—two male and female black-crowned herons.

The city, which recently declared itself a bird sanctuary, has launched a contest in search of the perfect name for the pair which recently moved into their new homes at the Makati Park and Garden.

"There are no criteria. We will just choose the most suitable name," Joey Salgado, chief of the city's Information and Community Relations Department, said yesterday.

The pair of herons were recently adopted by the Makati City government after being rescued by personnel of the Parks and Wildlife Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Those who want to take part in the

contest may submit their entries to the ICRD office at the Old Makati City Hall building. Entries may also be faxed to 8989838, or sent by e-mail to icrd@makati.gov.ph. The deadline for submission of entries is on May 19.

The winning name will be announced during the city's 336th foundation day in June.

Winners will get a cash prize and a trophy in the shape of a heron.

During the occasion, the city government will also formally launch the heron as the city's symbol.

Makati has a special affinity for the species which used to be plentiful in the city during the 16th century.

The city council recently passed an ordinance declaring Makati a bird sanctuary.

Under the ordinance, harming or capturing birds and damaging their nests are prohibited.

### METROBRIEFS

#### Woman nabbed in buy-bust

SOME P150,000 worth of anti-ulcer pills sometimes used to induce abortion were seized by authorities from a woman in Manila last Sunday. Insp. Cesar Tenorio of the Special Operations Group of the Manila Police District said they seized more than 2,000 tablets of Cytotec from Teresa Lozada, 44, a vendor from Punta, Sta. Ana. Cytotec is a pill that is usually taken to prevent ulcers. It can, however, cause miscarriages in pregnant women. Investigation showed that before Lozada's arrest, the police had received information that she was behind the proliferation of the pills in the Quiapo area. An undercover policeman later contacted the suspect in Quiapo and pretended that he wanted to buy some pills from her. When Lozada handed over the pills to the undercover policeman on R. Hidalgo, near the corner of Quezon Boulevard in Quiapo, she was arrested. Tina G. Santos, with Eliza Victoria, trainee

#### No overtime in Navotas

NAVOTAS Mayor Toby Tiangco has banned overtime work in government offices as part of the town's power conservation measures in anticipation of higher oil prices. In a statement, Tiangco also ordered all employees to save on electricity by following the power saving tips coming from the Manila Electric Company. To ensure that his directives were being followed, the mayor also directed the town's General Services Office to monitor the various government offices. Tiangco added that he will also ask the town's businessmen to participate in the power conservation program by reducing electricity consumption for lit up signs and billboards. Nancy C. Carvalho

#### NBI bans nightclub raids

AGENTS of the National Bureau of Investigation are now banned from conducting raids on nightspots without formal complaints from victims. NBI officer-in-charge Nestor Martaraling said the old practice of raiding nightclubs and beer houses based on "more tips" from informants has only encouraged corruption among the bureau's agents. "Some persons used the indiscriminate raids as a way to make milking cows of nightspot owners. The owners also feel like they are being harassed with these kinds of raids," he added. Margaux C. Ortiz



#### NEW PUBLIC LIBRARY

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and other city officials open the newly renovated Valeriano E. Fugoso Library on Aragon corner A.H. Lacson Streets in Sta. Cruz, Manila.

## Teenager dies, 3 hurt in QC road mishap

By DJ Yap

A COLLISION BETWEEN A TRI-CYCLE and a gas tanker left a teenager dead and three others hurt before dawn yesterday in Quezon City.

Rey Layad, 18, was killed instantly after the tri-cycle being driven by his friend Shaira Cruz, 19, rammed into a tanker at the corner of Aurora Boulevard and Gilmore Street at around 3:30 a.m., police said.

The two, along with Anjo Paligan, 18, and Ginevra Arboleda, 18, were on board the tri-cycle bound for Sta. Mesa, Manila, when the accident occurred, according to traffic officer Ricardo Angeles of the Quezon City traffic sector 4.

The tri-cycle was cruising along

Aurora Boulevard when the traffic light turned yellow. Instead of stopping, however, Cruz tried to beat the red light, not noticing the blue-gray tanker coming their way, Angeles said.

The impact caused Layad to fall off the vehicle, killing him instantly, police said. The other three passengers were rushed to the University of the East Ramon Magsaysay Hospital.

Arboleda sustained only a few scratches, while Paligan fractured his left hand. Cruz, on the other hand, told investigators she found it difficult to move the right side of her body.

Police are looking for the driver of the gas tanker who did not stop after colliding with the tri-cycle.

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID (DND-PROPER Procurement of IT Equipments)																			
The Department of National Defense, through DND-PROPER Bid and Awards Committee, invites suppliers/manufacturers/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following projects:																			
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Name of Project</th><th>Description</th><th>Approved Budget for Contract (ABC)</th><th></th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>A. Procurement of Desktop Computer</td><td>Supply and Delivery of Desktop Computer for DND-PROPER Offices</td><td>PHP 2,375,000.00</td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>B. Procurement of Laptop Computer</td><td>Supply and Delivery of Laptop Computer for DND-PROPER Offices</td><td>2,380,000.00</td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>Total</td><td>PHP 4,755,000.00</td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>				Name of Project	Description	Approved Budget for Contract (ABC)		A. Procurement of Desktop Computer	Supply and Delivery of Desktop Computer for DND-PROPER Offices	PHP 2,375,000.00		B. Procurement of Laptop Computer	Supply and Delivery of Laptop Computer for DND-PROPER Offices	2,380,000.00			Total	PHP 4,755,000.00	
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The schedule of activities are as follows:																			
ACTIVITIES	VENUE	DATE	TIME																
Issuance of Bid Documents	Procurement Branch, OAS Bldg., OND	April 18, 2006 to May 8, 2006	9:00 AM - 5:00 PM																
Pre-Bid Conference	OAS Annex Bldg.	April 27, 2006	9:30 AM - 12:00 NN																
Deadline for Submission / Opening of Bids	OAS Annex Bldg.	May 09, 2006	9:00 AM - 5:00 PM																
Bid Evaluation	These shall be in accordance with the prescribed periods allowed in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) A of R.A. 9184 dated 10 January 2003																		
Post-Qualification																			
Issuance of Notice of Award																			
III. Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of non-refundable amount of Four Thousand Eight Hundred Pesos (P4,800.00) to the DND Proper BAC Secretariat, Procurement Branch, Office of Administrative Services, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City, Tel. No. 811-8118.																			
IV. The eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted. All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations Part-A (IRR-A).																			
V. To facilitate eligibility checking, manufacturers and/or suppliers who wish to participate in the public bidding may apply for registration with the DND-PROPER BAC Secretariat at least fifteen (15) days prior to the scheduled submission and opening of bids for the procurement projects they wish to participate.																			
VI. The DND assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.																			
VII. The DND reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any formality and award the Contract to the bidder whose proposal is the most advantageous to the government as evaluated by the DND-PROPER Bids and Awards Committee (DND-PROPER BAC).																			
VIII. The Invitation is also posted in the DBM Procurement Service website at <a href="http://www.procurementservice.org">www.procurementservice.org</a> , and the DND website, in accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184. Further, it shall also be posted at conspicuous places in the premises of the Department of National Defense (DND).																			
(Sgd.) ASSISTANT SECRETARY RUBEN F. CIRON Chairman, DND-PROPER BAC																			

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# Nepal parties call for demo at king's doorstep

KATHMANDU—NEPAL'S ROYAL government imposed a fresh daytime curfew Monday after the opposition vowed a huge anti-monarchy protest and six people died in a Maoist rebel attack.

The seven-hour curfew order in Kathmandu came as opposition leaders ramped up pressure on beleaguered King Gyanendra by announcing a major demonstration for Tuesday in the capital after 18 days of protests and strikes demanding an end to the monarch's absolute rule.

Meanwhile, the US Embassy told the families of diplomats and some staff to leave the country

because of security concerns.

The embassy in a statement warned other American citizens "should also depart Nepal as soon as possible."

Leaders from a seven-party alliance will address a rally at seven points on the 27-kilometer ring road around the capital, according to reports, as senior opposition leaders vowed to take the protest to the royal palace.

"The democratic republic has reached up to the king's ring road and now it moves to the royal palace," said senior protest leader Bamdev Gautam at a rally on the

northern outskirts of the city late Sunday.

"We will organize a big protest the day after tomorrow and I request all the people to come on to the streets to make it a success," said the high-ranking member of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist), one of the alliance parties.

The parties said they planned 1,000 marches, mass meetings and effigy burnings Monday as a curtain raiser to the main protest throughout the Kathmandu Valley, the area encompassing the capital and home to 1.7 million people, according to reports.

King Gyanendra, in a bid to thwart new protests, on Monday set a new curfew in central Kathmandu from 11 a.m. until 6 p.m., state television said, warning anyone who violated the order could be shot on sight.

Official cars with loudspeakers toured the streets warning people to stay inside their homes.

The city was suffering shortages of fuel, food and other essential goods as piles of festering rubbish littered the streets.

Large sections of the ring road were covered with burnt tires and roadblocks from nearly three weeks of daily protests as the king

has struggled to quell the escalating calls for his removal.

Rebels, meanwhile, launched simultaneous attacks with guns and grenades late Sunday on a telecoms tower and police station at Chautara, 120 kilometers northeast of Kathmandu, that left five Maoists and a soldier dead, the army said.

"Five bodies of Maoists were recovered from the clash site Monday morning and one of our men also died," said an official from army headquarters on condition of anonymity.

King Gyanendra seized power in February 2005 because he said

the government was corrupt and had failed to tackle the bloody Maoist insurgency, which has left more than 12,500 dead over the last decade.

The seven-party alliance called on security forces to switch sides after at least 27 more protesters were injured Sunday during clashes on the outskirts of the capital.

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, meanwhile, called Sunday for a rapid restoration of the multi-party system in Nepal to end the unrest gripping the kingdom, which he said has deeply troubled India. *AFP*

## US Senate to reignite debate on immigration

WASHINGTON—PRODDED BY large demonstrations and the prospect of another on the horizon, Senate leaders will try to revive stalled immigration legislation this week, with some urging President Bush to mediate personally the sharp differences among Republicans on the volatile issue.

Two weeks after the Senate walked away from its immigration debate, leaders of both parties are expressing a new sense of urgency to act before the November midterm elections. Bush, who has made immigration a centerpiece of his legislative agenda and who could use a victory on Capitol Hill to revive his flagging second term, is expected to address the issue again on Monday in an appearance in Irvine, Calif.

After an Easter recess punctuated by large immigrant rights protests, both Democrats and Republicans say their colleagues recognize that if they do not press ahead, it could bring a reaction from those who want stricter border enforcement, business operators who rely on foreign workers and advocates of immigrant rights.

"We're not going to be stampeded, but at the same time we understand that there is a giant problem out there," said Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., and chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, who set a hearing for Tuesday on the economic impact.

Specter said he intended to use a White House meeting the same day to encourage Bush to "get into the fray now" by getting House and Senate Republicans to reconcile differences before the Senate passes a bill. "The time has come for specifics," Specter said.

Sen. Harry Reid of Nevada, the Democratic leader blamed by Republicans for tying up the legislation, and Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., a chief architect of the Senate measure that fell apart two weeks ago, also called on Bush to get involved. In interviews, each said the president must push back against conservatives who want to limit the legislation to stronger border enforcement.

Bush has said he favors legislation that includes a guest worker program for illegal immigrants, and he used his radio address on Saturday to reiterate that goal.

Some Senate Republicans, led by John McCain of Arizona, are championing an approach that mixes stiffer border controls with potential citizenship for some illegal immigrants. *NYT*



SNUPPY (left), the first male dog cloned from adult cells by somatic nuclear cell transfer and his Labrador surrogate mother.

## World Bank backs \$37-B debt relief to 17 poor nations

WASHINGTON—WORLD BANK MEMBERS have given formal backing to the cancellation of \$37 billion in debt owed the Bank by 17 poor countries—most of them in Africa—at weekend meetings here of global finance leaders ending Sunday.

The endorsement came with a warning to beneficiary countries to avoid running up new obligations.

Colombian Finance Minister Alberto Carrasquilla, chairman of the World Bank's policymaking Development Committee, said members of the panel stressed that "countries that have received debt relief should avoid the accumulation of new, unsustainable debt."

They in addition noted "the importance of debt sustainability as a key consideration in the future commitment of development resources," Carrasquilla said.

The Bank's debt cancellation scheme will take effect July 1.

The World Bank's sister institution, the International Monetary Fund, approved the cancellation of \$3.3 billion worth of debt in January.

Both debt relief projects were agreed upon last year by the Group of Eight powers—Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United States.

The Bank and the Fund now plan to monitor new debt accumulation and have called on beneficiary countries to commit resources freed up by debt relief to anti-poverty initiatives.

*AFP*

## Cloned dog marks first birthday

SEOUL—THE WORLD'S FIRST AND ONLY cloned dog celebrated its first birthday on Monday, as the leader of the South Korean team that produced the Afghan hound faced a criminal investigation for possible fraud and ethics violations.

The team led by scientist Hwang Woo-suk unveiled the dog named Snuppy last August amid global fanfare. Time magazine named Snuppy one of the most amazing inventions for 2005.

Hwang once basked in acclaim for his scientific achievements, with some in the country labelling him "the pride of Korea."

By the end of last year, however, his reputation was in tatters amid charges his team deliberately manipulated data and violated ethical standards in human egg procurement.

The birthday celebrations at the university where Hwang once ran his lab were subdued. Snuppy, short for Seoul National University puppy, is in good health and weighs about 29 kilograms (64 lb), university officials said. *Reuters*

## WORLD BRIEFS

### Hungary winner Gyurcsany charts new reforms

BUDAPEST—Hungary's Socialist Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany, who won a historic relection Sunday, is a millionaire businessman turned politician on a quest to modernize his formerly communist EU state. Gyurcsany's Socialists and their coalition partners, the liberal Free Democrats, triumphed in Sunday's runoff general elections, marking the first time since the fall of communism in 1989 that an outgoing Hungarian government has remained in office. "What we won is not about power. What we won is responsibility and work," a cheerful but restrained Gyurcsany told thousands of applauding supporters as he claimed victory on Sunday evening.

GYURCSANY seems to have won as he claimed victory on Sunday evening.

Gyurcsany's name has become synonymous with reform in Hungary, a post-communist economic success that is now plagued by a soaring budget deficit. *AP*

### Singapore opposition party refuses apology

SINGAPORE—A Singapore opposition party is refusing to meet a Tuesday deadline to apologize to Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and his father over allegations of corruption, the party's leader said Monday. "We're not apologizing. Just because they say it's defamatory doesn't mean it's defamatory," Chee Soon Juan, secretary general of the Singapore Democratic Party (SDP), told AFP. Lee and his father, the city-state's first Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, told Chee and 11 members of his party's central executive committee they would face legal action if they did not apologize and pay damages by the deadline, local media have reported. Lawyers for the Lee family say their clients were defamed in articles carried in the SDP's recent newsletter, which is sold on the streets. The lawyers said the articles implied the prime minister was perpetuating a corrupt political system set up by his father, Singapore's independence leader, to benefit the political elite. The other Lee holds the title of minister mentor in his son's Cabinet. *AP*

### Jurors to weigh Moussaoui's life

ALEXANDRIA, Virginia—After a turbulent trial laced with the tragedy of Sept. 11, jurors will Monday be told by a US judge to decide whether al-Qaeda plotter Zacarias Moussaoui should live or die. Moussaoui, the only man tried in the United States over the murderous 2001 strikes on New York and Washington which killed nearly 3,000 people, faces death or life in prison without parole. Though he was in jail on the fateful day, prosecutors say he hid his knowledge of the plot to let 19 al-Qaeda "brothers" pull off the attacks. Defense lawyers, with whom Moussaoui has refused to cooperate, counter the Frenchman of Moroccan descent is a liar, bent on claiming an undeserved place in history, and should be spared as he is a paranoid schizophrenic. Judge LaDonna Brinkema will reconvene court on Monday for dramatic final arguments, before instructing jurors on the complicated set of aggravating and mitigating factors that will lead them to their verdict. They have already found Moussaoui eligible for execution, after the first phase of the trial which saw six weeks of evidence. *AP*



MOUSSAOUI *AP*

### Bush asks Baker to lead Iraq study

WASHINGTON—In the late 1960s, an anguished President Lyndon B. Johnson sought advice from a respected elder statesman on the Vietnam quagmire. In part because of the counsel of former Secretary of State Dean Acheson, a one-time hawk turned skeptic on the war, Johnson shifted course in 1968, halting the bombing of North Vietnam and announcing he would not run for reelection. The analogy is far from perfect, but Republicans and Democrats are seeing parallels between the quiet designation last month of former Secretary of State James A. Baker III to head up a congressionally mandated effort to generate new ideas on Iraq and the role of Acheson, who had served under President Harry Truman. Baker, a longtime confidant of the first President Bush who has maintained a close but complicated relationship with the current president, plans to travel to Baghdad and the region to meet with heads of state on a fact-finding mission. "If you had a health problem, you'd want somebody to give you a second opinion," said Rep. Frank R. Wolf, an influential Virginia Republican who helped recruit Baker for the job. "What the United States needs on Iraq is some fresh ideas from people able to speak out, and no one is more qualified to do that than Jim Baker." *NYT*

## 4th Human Capital Forum Co-Sourcing: A new Workforce Strategy

May 12, 2006 1:00 - 5:00 PM

Quezon A Function Room, Makati Shangri-La Hotel



### Co-Sourcing Myth, Math and Magic

HR professionals have found more and more services that they can outsource successfully—recruitment, payroll, and benefits administration to name a few. But while outsourcing works well for administrative tasks that require little ongoing involvement of the Human Resource function in an organization, it is not suited for HR processes that are more strategic in nature and require greater input. Now comes... Co-sourcing, a partnership between the HR function and a service provider that is poised to become the next big wave in workforce strategy.

This session, aptly titled, Co-sourcing: Myth, Math and Magic, will differentiate the fact from the fiction, disclose co-sourcing investment requirements, and reveal the sustainable benefits co-sourcing can provide organizations.

### 2005 Mercer Health & Benefits Study

A total of eighty four companies participated in the 2005 Mercer Health & Benefits Study, the first of its kind undertaken in the Philippines. Highlights of the survey will be presented to give an overview of the employee benefit insurance market. The data and analysis should provide forum participants with a useful lens that they can use to plan or review their own respective benefits programs. Nine (9) Employee Benefit Programs are reviewed, ranging from Group Medical to Travel Insurance.

### 2006 Compensation Outlook

As the war for top-notch talent becomes increasingly more heated than ever, organizations struggle to come up with far-reaching creative approaches to build a strong 'employee value proposition'. The need for timely, comprehensive, and high-quality human capital information for sound analysis and decision-making has never been more critical. Bringing the statistics together, this session will allow the participants to gain valuable insights on what the trends are in Compensation, Hiring, Salary Market Movement, Emerging HR Practices and Issues and how these impact the organizations.

Please register on or before April 28, 2006.

Limited slots only.

Participant Fee: P2,250 (VAT inclusive)

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### FORUM SPEAKERS

Su-Yen Wong is the Managing Director of Mercer Human Resource Consulting, ASEAN. She has over fourteen years' experience helping leading companies across North America and Asia develop business and organization strategies, improve operations, manage risk, and effectively implement change.

Ms. Wong is a frequent speaker at conferences in Asia, including recent events sponsored by the Economist, Business Week and Asia Business Forum. She is an experienced facilitator and has led strategy development and change management workshops for senior management teams across Asia.

Dr. Noel A. de Leon, PhD is the Country Manager of Mercer Human Resource Consulting in the Philippines. He has more than 25 years of experience in HR Management and Information Technology. He has been involved in various foreign and local projects relating to organizational development, change management and other related projects.

He regularly facilitates public seminars and has been invited to lecture on various topics both in the academic and business world. He is also an author of numerous published articles and lectures in business graduate school on part time basis.

Emmerline Navarro is the Vice President and Head of Mercer's Health & Benefits Business. She began her career in the insurance industry in 1988 when she joined Johnson & Higgins, now known as Marsh Philippines, Inc. Emmerline's extensive experience in insurance broking and benefits consulting enabled her, together with her team, to implement innovative services and solutions that benefit their multinational and local clients.

Mellanie Daracan is the Business Leader for Human Capital Product Solutions in the Philippines. She managed the Total Remuneration Survey for All Industry, Asia Pacific Compensation and Benefits Forum (APCBF), Asia Pacific IT and Telecoms (APITT), Chemical, Computer, Energy, and Hi-Tech industries in the Philippines. She has been the local project team manager for global consulting projects, particularly in mergers and acquisition covering inventory and review of compensation and benefits packages.

For further inquiries and to register, please contact Yen Cortes at (632) 810-0704, 810-0705 local 107 or email us at [blessie.pioquinto@mercer.com](mailto:blessie.pioquinto@mercer.com)

# The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

## Tape mocks US failure to get Bin Laden

WASHINGTON—THE WHITE HOUSE SAID SUNDAY that al-Qaida leaders were "on the run" as the emergence of a new tape from Osama bin Laden served as a vexing reminder of the US failure to track down the terror mastermind.

"The al-Qaida leadership is on the run and under a lot of pressure. We are continuing to take the fight to the enemy abroad, and making it difficult for them to plan and plot against America," White House spokesperson Scott McClellan told reporters, adding that the US intelligence com-

munity believes the tape is authentic.

Another top US official cautioned that the audiotape warning by Osama bin Laden aired by Al-Jazeera on Sunday should not be taken lightly.

"I believe we need to take him seriously," US Ambassador to Iraq Zal-

may Khalilzad said in an interview with CNN, adding that Bin Laden was trying to demonstrate with the tape that "he's still a player."

"He wants to be relevant to the situation. He wants to get attention," Khalilzad said.

The al-Qaida chief called on Muslim fighters to go to Sudan to wage war against "crusader thieves" and slammed the international isolation of the Hamas-led Palestinian government as proof of a "war by crusaders and Zionists against Islam."

It was not clear when the tape was made, but if it proves gen-

tine, it would be the first from Bin Laden since Jan. 19.

But the audiotape also served as a bleak reminder that, four and a half years after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, the mastermind has yet to be tracked down.

Jane Harman, the top Democrat on the House of Representatives' Intelligence Committee, blamed the US military involvement in Iraq for having "bogged down" American troops and other resources and diverting attention from capturing Bin Laden.

"The tape reminds us that four

years after 9/11, Osama bin Laden is still at large, the subject of the largest manhunt in history, and we haven't been able to find him," said Harman on Fox News Sunday.

Republican Sen. Arlen Specter also expressed frustration that so little apparent progress has been made in tracking down Bin Laden.

"Frankly, I'm very dissatisfied that we haven't brought him to justice and I think it has to be a top priority," he said. Locating him, Specter added, is "a tiny needle in a giant haystack."

Democratic Sen. John Kerry

said that Bin Laden continuing to be at-large "is one of the reasons that (US Defense Secretary) Donald Rumsfeld should resign."

Kerry, who ran against President George W. Bush in the 2004 presidential election, criticized the Bush administration for failing to capture Bin Laden at Tora Bora in Afghanistan in late 2001.

Bin Laden is believed to have evaded capture by US and Afghan forces during the battle at Tora Bora and to be now hiding in Pakistan despite Bush's call for him to be hunted down "dead or alive." AFP



BIN LADEN in Afghanistan in undated photo.

**Director trod softly in filming Flight 93's story**

By Jere Longman

NEW YORK—IN MAKING THE MOVIE "United 93," Paul Greengrass had to confront not only the bloody grimness of a terrorist hijacking, but also the sensitive politics of heroism.

As the courageous behavior of passengers and crew members who battled the four hijackers on the plane that crashed in a Pennsylvania field on Sept. 11, 2001, became public, some families grew troubled that four former athletes who made phone calls from the plane—Todd Beamer, Mark Bingham, Tom Burnett and Jeremy Glick—received almost all the sunlight of media exposure. Many others aboard were left in shadow.

It's not that other victims' families discounted or resented the valor of those men. But the families resisted early attempts by politicians to honor only these four. There was concern that bravery aboard United Airlines Flight 93 not be made into a kind of Olympic sport, where some passengers received a gold medal for gallantry while others had to settle for silver or bronze.

"United 93" has its premiere on Tuesday at the Tribeca Film Festival and opens in theaters nationwide on Friday. More than half of the families of the victims have seen the film at screenings in Newark, N.J., and suburbs of San Francisco, the departure and destination cities for the flight, said a spokesperson for Universal, the studio releasing the film. Others requested and were sent DVDs, some say they can't bear to watch it.

Greengrass, who wrote and directed the movie, contacted the families early in the process; actors in the film also met with family members.

In truth, no one can know precisely who did what during the rebellion that prevented the hijackers from reaching their presumed target in Washington. None of the 33 passengers and seven crew members survived when the plane crashed into a spongy field outside Shanksville, Pa.

Not everyone could charge the cockpit along the narrow aisle of a 757 jetliner, family members concede. But they believe strongly that everyone did what he could in the face of horrific fear and certain death—consoled, encouraging, planning, praying.

In this widely held view, everyone should be considered equal in a collective act of bold resistance.

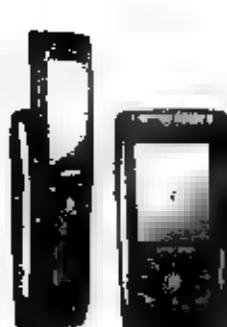
Yet some family members expressed disappointment with the breadth of television movies made previously about Flight 93, feeling that the lives of some lesser-known passengers and crew members were diminished or ignored.

Greengrass seemed to understand the delicacy of this issue acutely when he made his film and succeeded in depicting a group-inspired defiance, relatives of other passengers said in telephone interviews.

"I think they went out of their way to reinforce that it was 40 fantastic individuals who banded together to effect change in a drastic situation," said Gordon Peet, whose brother, Edward, was a passenger.



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## Key La Salle meet tackles UAAP ban

By Jasmine W. Payo

TOP OFFICIALS OF DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY will decide in an emergency meeting today its course of action after the UAAP recently suspended the school from competing in all sports disciplines this year in the wake of eligibility violations committed by two members of its champion men's basketball team in 2004.

"The meeting might lead to the creation of a special group to do further studies. There are many affected parties," Lito Tanjuato, a member of the university's board of trustees and board of regents, said yesterday.

Filing an appeal remains an option for La Salle, but Tanjuato noted that the move "is a very complicated matter which has many legal ramifications."

Tanjuato also assailed the UAAP for denying La Salle due process in the eligibility scandal involving Archers Mark Benitez and Tim Gatchalian.

"We cited that it is the basic right of any person or institution to first be charged, be given the opportunity to refute the charges before being subjected to judgment," said Tanjuato in a press conference at his Ortigas office yesterday.

Aside from the league's failure to specify the charges, Tanjuato stressed that it did not identify "the guilty parties" nor "provide a recommendation to the UAAP board of trustees."

"When La Salle submitted its report to the UAAP it said it was not satisfied," said Tanjuato. "But it had no glaring difference (from La Salle's findings)."

In its internal investigation last year, La Salle tagged Archers assistant team manager Manny Saigdo and contractual statistician Raul Laeson as the officials who helped secure the fake academic records that allowed Benitez and Gatchalian to play for the Archers, who went on to win the title in 2004.

Benitez still saw action for the Archers last year while Gatchalian was cut from the team roster.

Tanjuato also questioned the voting held in Friday's meeting. In initial discussions, he claimed the board decided not to render immediate sanctions but deliberate only on possible charges against La Salle.

"Many will call this treachery," said Tanjuato. "Instead of preparing and furnishing us with the list of charges or a written complaint, the UAAP board summarily decided, declared DLSU guilty."

"Charges must first be filed, then DLSU is given reasonable time to reply to the charges, and then and only then can a decision be rendered."

While the UAAP board members were unanimous in their decision to suspend La Salle, they differed in the length of ban to be imposed. In the end, the one-year penalty won by a 5-2 vote.

Meanwhile, the UAAP board has yet to discuss possible changes in its league records, including the overall standings in the last three years, as a result of the controversy.



ALEX Compton of Montafia tries to ward off Marvin Ortiguer of Rain or Shine in this file photo.

## Nat'l Open wrestling today

SOUTHEAST GAMES GOLD MEDALISTS Christina Villanueva and Gemma Silverio WILL lead national team members who will see action when the 2006 Wrestling National Open unfurls today at the Atrium Robinson's Place Ermita.

Villanueva, who ruled the women's freestyle

51-kg class in the 23rd SEA Games, and Silverio, winner in the 59kg, will be competing in

higher weight categories this year. Villanueva will see action in the 55-kg class while Silverio will strut her wares in the 63-kg division.

Joining them are fellow nationals and SEAG gold medalists Jimmy Angana, (59-kg freestyle) and Francis Villanueva (120-kg Greco Roman), silver medalists Margarita Angana (55-kg Greco Roman) and Cherry Matriz (72-kg freestyle).

## Rising stars backstop Legends in NBA Tour

CALVIN MURPHY, DENNIS RODMAN AND co. will not be without help when they take on two well-prepared Philippine sides.

Several standouts from the National Basketball Association's Developmental League will join the Legends in two games of The Bad Boy Tour, with Arkansas Rambler Kareem Reid promising to be a headache for the Filipinos.

The 5-foot-11 point guard is a devastating scorer who can truly light it up from inside and out and he is just one of the guys Pilipinas Basketball coach Chot Reyes said he is wary of.

"We've not had the benefit to scout these guys," Reyes said. "Sure, we all know how the Legends play, but we are in the dark as to the young guys that they will be bringing in."

Tickets are available through all

The game will be very interesting."

Former Oral Roberts University star Chad Wilkerson is also flying in, together with Myron Allen, Olu Famutimi and Conon Boducker for the games scheduled at the Mandau Sports Center on Thursday against the San Miguel All-Stars and on May 1 against the RP Team at the Araneta Coliseum.

Allen is a 6-foot guard while Famutimi is a 6-foot-5 small forward. Wilkerson is 6-11 and was the Golden Eagles' leading scorer with a 16.3 average in 1999.

"I tell you, these guys can all play and give the fans the game they want to see—high-scoring and above-the-rim," Mario Whitmore, president of the organization West End Sports, said.

Tickets are available through all

## Ozamiz five nips Iligan in NBC tilt

ILIGAN CITY—DEFENDING CHAMPION Ozamiz repulsed Firefly Lightnings-backed Iligan, 72-69, Sunday to remain as the only unbeaten team in the 2006 Guerrero Brandy-NBC national basketball championship at the packed MSU-ITT gym here.

Billy Bansil sparred in the playoff period to lead the Cotta Shrine cagers of Mayor Reynaldo Parojing to their straight victory in the tourney sponsored by Panasonic, Sulpicio Lanes, Nature's Spring Mineral Water, Spring Cooking Oil, Regent Foods, Firefly Lightnings, Molten and Prime Channel.

Bansil finished with 19 points and 12 rebounds as he helped deal the crusaders of Mayor Lawrence Cruz and team manager Freddie Siao their third loss in seven games.

The Crusaders started strong and erected double-digit leads. But Ozamiz hit its stride in the second canto, going on a 12-0 run to move ahead, 35-33, and then settled for a 38-35 halftime edge.

Last season's MVR Christian Nicdao, and Freddie Go sparked a 13-0 drive by Iligan to tie the score at 66, but the Ozamiz cagers steadied down the stretch to pull through.

Ilgan tied Gov. Manny Piñol's North Cotabato Braves at second place in the southern division.

The scores:

OZAMIZ 72—Bansil 19, Alberto 10, Basco 10, Samilo 9, Alvarado 7, Llango 5, Guerrero 4, Cavan 2, Yabut 2

Lapera 2, Cabiglio 0

ILIGAN 69—Go 20, Nicdao 12, Hubaida 11, Ayodilled 11, Omping 8, Segad 2, Mattas 2, Gendarosa 2, Canoy 2,

Baguio 2, Kalaw 1, Taguitos 0.

Quarters: 16-21, 38-36, 60-46, 72-69



MEMBERS of the NBA Legends team share a light moment after their arrival from San Francisco yesterday morning. From left: Otis Birdsong, Calvin Murphy, Darryl Dawkins and Sidney Moncrief. Dennis Rodman and Alex English, the two other stars of the Legends team, will arrive tomorrow.

JESS YUSON



RIDING THE WAVES: Australian Rebecca Woods rides a wave during the Roxy Pro in Tavarua yesterday. Woods placed second in her opening round heat to advance to round three where she will face Hawaiian Megan Abubo.

AP

## RP trackfest joining Olympic Festival

THE ANNUAL NATIONAL OPEN track and field championships will push through in June instead of the first week in May.

The new schedule allows the Philippine Amateur Track and Field Association to stage its centerpiece event simultaneously with the Philippine Olympic Committee (POC)-backed Olympic Festival in Nueva Ecija on June 21-25.

Patata president Go Teng Kok added that the decision to reset

the National Open from its original May 4-7 date is more advantageous "to us and the Philippine Sports Commission."

"We understand that the PSC is having problems with its finances, and holding the National Open with other national open of other NSAs in the Olympic Festival would be beneficial to all parties," he said.

The original schedule also runs

in conflict with the Paarong Pamanga set May 7-13 in Naga City.

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# Samsung Tour opening leg starts at BCC today

BAGUIO—MARVIN DUMANDAN guns for a second straight major title as he leads a star-studded cast vying for the championship division in the first leg of the Samsung Amateur Golf Tour starting today at the Baguio Country Club course here.

Dumandan, winner of the DHL-  
WWW Express Amateur Open at  
Canlubang last month, will be up

against almost the same band of  
challengers in the 72-hole tour-  
ney kicking off a five-leg elimination  
series all over the country.

Also in the field are Mike Bibat  
and Jay Bayron, who teamed up  
with the Riviera-based Dumandan  
and the now-professional Ju-  
vic Paguntan in winning the  
Manila Southeast Asian Games gold  
medal last December.

National Caddies Open champ  
Jessie Balasbas and Jonel Ababa,  
the star of Canlubang's winning  
campaign in the PAL Interclub,  
spearhead the contingent from  
the Calatagan stable.

Posing as a big threat to the lo-  
cals are 16 Koreans carrying sin-  
gle-digit handicaps including last  
year's national champion Kim  
Chang-hoi.

The Samsung Tour is the only  
series in the country which fea-  
tures gross competitions in differ-  
ent handicap classifications for  
men and ladies. It is also spon-  
sored by Titleist, Taylor Made, C-  
Lium Fibre, Microtel and Custom  
Clubmakers/KZG, Sunbelt with  
Jam 88.3, Wave 89.1, Magic 89.9  
and 99.5 RT, Sports Plus as media  
partners.

Coinciding with the champion-  
ship division play are the 36-  
hole competitions in Class C and  
Class D. Golfers in Class A and  
Class B play on April 27-28 simul-  
taneous with the last two rounds  
of the championship.

The other legs in the Samsung  
Tour calendar are Summit Point in  
Lipa City, on May 16-19, Rancho  
Palos Verdes in Mandug, Davao  
or 0917-8121242.

City, on June 15-18, Splendido  
Taal on Aug. 8-11 and Del Monte  
in Cawayanon, Bukidnon, on Oct.  
5-8.

The national finals will be host-  
ed again by the Mt. Malarayat  
Golf Club in Lupa City, Nov. 7-10.

For inquiries, contact the Pro-  
fessional Sports Management  
Group at 635-0010, fax 6315768  
or 0917-8121242.

# Asian pool slots up in qualifying



JENNIFER Chen: Among the top contenders

SIXTEEN SLOTS TO THE MAIN DRAW OF THE RICH ENERVA ASIAN 9-  
ball Tour Ladies Championship are at stake in the qualifying round to-  
day at the Paeng's Skybowl in Robinson's Galleria, Mandaluyong City.

National team member Mary  
Ann Basas and Johanna Dee are  
the Filipinos in the qualifying  
field. They will try to join seeded  
compatriots Ruben Amit and  
Inish Ranola in the 32-man main  
draw of the event that offers  
\$10,000 to the champion.

The losing finalist in the event  
organized by sportsman Aristedo  
"Putch" Puyat, goes home with  
\$5,000. The losing semifinalists  
earn \$2,500 each, while fifth to tenth  
spots are good for \$1,500 each.

The event is also supported by  
Nature's Best Products Inc. and  
Solar Sports Entertainment and  
sanctioned by the Asian Confed-  
eration of Billiards Sports and the  
Billiards and Snooker Congress of  
the Philippines (BSCP) headed by  
Ernesto "Ernie" Pajardo.

Main draw action gets going  
tomorrow until Friday at the  
Robinson's Galleria fountain area  
and will be aired live on IBC-13  
and Solar Sports.

A large number of foreign partic-  
ipants will also seek places in the  
final 32, among them Angeline Mag-  
dalena Ticotha of Indonesia, Hyun

## Lyceum spikers win

By Marc Anthony Reyes

LYCEUM DREW FIRE FROM MAIN  
gunner Conon Legaspi to turn  
back Far Eastern University, 26-24.

25-23, 16-25, 25-19, yesterday and  
join early leaders in the Shakey's V-  
League at the Blue Eagle Gym.

Typifying the Lady Pirates' tenacity,  
Legaspi made 16 of her 18  
points on attack. She got ample  
support from Dahlia Cruz and Beverly  
Boto, who joined hands for five  
points coming from blocks.

"Defense did it for us," said Lyceum  
coach Emil Lomoc, whose charges  
won the WNCAA ride last year.

The Lady Tamaraws, last year's  
University Games champion, man-

aged to push the Lady Pirates to the  
edge especially in the first two sets  
but later on found the opposing  
side impenetrable with Cruz and  
Boto behind the net.

Legaspi, who was part of the  
champion La Salle last conference,  
was at the forefront of the Lyceum  
charge, hitting solid spikes which  
FEU failed to fend off.

Lyceum joined Ateneo and Adam-  
son in the lead with one win apiece  
in the event presented by Shakey's  
Pizza with support from Mikasa and  
Acel and aired over ABC-5.

La Salle and San Sebastian, the  
UAAP and NCAA champion, respec-  
tively, were still playing at press time,  
each eyeing a share of the lead.

## Counting on Kobe

SPECTATOR



Al S. Mendoza

I LIKE KOBE BRYANT AND THE LOS ANGE-  
LES Lakers to advance. But that's more of a  
wishful thinking than anything.

Despite Bryant, the seventh-seeded Lakers  
(45-37) are expected to be ousted off by the  
Phoenix Suns (54-28). The Suns aren't only No.  
2 but are talent-rich; to begin with, they have  
Steve Nash, the Sun that never sets.

The Lakers are lucky they are back, consider-  
ing they are now a non-glamour team with only  
one star: Bryant. Certainly, Mihm, Odom, a  
Parker named Smush, and a Brown called  
Kwame are hardly household names.

Kwame Brown. Yeah. He was the upstart  
Michael Jordan had signed up for Washington  
and later lambasted while the six-ring NBA leg-  
end was still a Wizard.

While the Lakers were thrown into the mis-  
fortune of meeting such a powerhouse team in  
Phoenix this early, the Clippers, the Lakers' bro-  
thers in Los Angeles, can be considered lucky.  
The sixth-seeded Clippers (47-35) have the  
home court advantage and are not exactly the  
underdogs against the third-seeded Denver  
Nuggets (44-38).

In the unlikely event that they pull through,  
the NBA's most wondrous match-up will material-  
ize in the next round: Lakers versus Clippers.  
Imagine a series played in the same building—  
the Staples Center in Los Angeles—between  
teams of contrasting styles and fan following. A  
knockout!

But for Bryant at the moment, the goal—a  
monumental one, to say the least—is to achieve  
the nearly impossible: defeat the Suns. For in-  
deed, the Lakers' series with the Suns will be a

defining moment in Bryant's Shaq-less life two  
years after the celebrated, amnesia-ridden  
Bryant-O'Neal breakup at Los Angeles.

Surely, it's hoping against hope. Despite his  
enormous talent, Bryant, who won this year's  
scoring title, will need the help of all his nonde-  
script teammates—and a miracle—to survive  
the Suns.

An acid test, indeed, for a guy who, as an 18-  
year-old prep, went from high school to the  
NBA just a while back.

Of the 78 winners thus far in the Philippine  
Poker Tour, one is a woman. Of the 350 who  
have participated, 20 are women.

So, who said poker is a male-only event?

Any game that requires intelligence is gen-  
der-free. Any table sport that demands guts is  
for all sexes. In short, poker is for the intelligent,  
gutsy.

The nationwide tournament has produced  
65 winners from Metro Manila, 11 from Cebu  
and two from Baguio.

The satellite events are set at San Miguel  
Alabang Town Center every Wednesday, Valle Verde  
Country Club in Pasig every Friday and Saturday,  
and at Elbow Room at Metro Walk in Pasig

every Thursday. In Cebu City, it's at Raja Park  
Hotel every Friday.

Those who wish to directly join the main  
event on April 29-30, go to Airport Casino Fil-  
ipino in Paranaque. Players can also register online  
by visiting [www.philippinepokertour.com](http://www.philippinepokertour.com).  
Pay P21,000 before April 29 and you are auto-  
matically qualified to win the top prize of P1  
million plus a gold bracelet. Second prize is  
P200,000, third prize P100,000 and from 4th to  
10th placers, from P50,000 to P40,000.

My salutation goes to Rey Gamboa, whose  
passion for this thousand-year-old or so game  
that's fit only for brave hearts and the mentally  
tough has led to the birth of the tournament ro-  
bustly backed by such fine guys like Ed Mapa  
and Arben Santos. Cheers!

GEEWHIZ TO PEEWEE. The Pasay City  
Mayor's Cup on April 28 at Villamor is worthy of  
our support since it is a socio-oriented event.  
Mayor Peewee Trinidad will use the proceeds of  
the tournament to help finance the schooling,  
feeding centers and soup kitchens for the city's  
street children. Among the major backers of the  
18-hole put together by big-hearted guys like  
Jun Amante, Fred Suarez and Lt. General Jose  
Reyes, are Philippine Airlines, Pagcor, San  
Miguel Corp., Don Mariano Nocum, Panasonic,  
Rustan's and my own newspaper, the Inquirer.  
Here's a glass to man's infinite kindness. I plan to  
do my own share by working as rules man for  
the tournament in tandem with my idol, Mr.  
Golf himself, Tabby "Insan" Tabanag.

Comments to [menju@pldtd.net](mailto:menju@pldtd.net)

## Sportswatch

### Ubaban non-master champion

NAZARIO UBABAN BEAT ROEL ABELGAS IN THE LAST ROUND TO EMERGE AS  
THIS MONTH CHAMPION OF THE ACCA CHESS FEST NON-MASTER DIVISION. Ubaban won  
P3,000 cash and a trophy donated by Loren Tablog of Chess Class 149 Internet  
Café. Other winners in this event organized by Active Chess Center of Asia Inc.  
were Christopher Castellano, Diko Ballecer, Jason Salubre and Nelson Mariano  
III, second to fifth places.

### Roligon derby slates 58 matches

THE SHOWDOWN OF PROM NENT COCKERS RESUME TODAY AT THE NEWLY  
renovated and 15,000-seat Roligon Mega Cockpit via the National Cockers Asso-  
ciation (NCA) 5-cock derby featuring 58 superb matches. Today's hosts are Gov.  
Ito Ynares, Rep. Butch Pitay and actor Edu Manzano. Meanwhile, the Tukaan 5-  
cock derby finally unfolds on Saturday and on May 2, 4 and 6. "With more than  
150 fights on Saturday's opening round, the derby will start at 2 p.m.," said host  
Rolly Ligon who put up a guaranteed prize of P2 million for an entry fee at  
P8,800. For details, call 851-2275, 833-1638 and 852-9812 (Jona).

### Salpukan at Makati tomorrow

THE SUMMER SALPUKAN 8-COCK DERBY WITH P4.4 MILLION AT STAKE  
blasts off tomorrow at Makati Coliseum. Sponsor is B-Meg Derby Ace. The cock-  
fest continues April 29, May 2, 4, 6, 11 and 13, the event dangles the following  
guaranteed prizes: P3 million cash, two brand new Toyota cars (Vios and Allis) and  
two motorcycles. Among those competing are Salpukan I double champion  
Rey Briones, Boy Marzo, Erwin Mallari, Dorne Corpuz, Rep. Baham Mitra, Boy  
Javer, Butchay Olano, Emill Chua, Alex Calderon, Luis Tapia, Celso Evangelista,  
Spennor Group, Efren Cañete and Jinggo Brothers. "Cockers and breeders should  
note that the entry fee of only P11,000 is the same as in an ordinary 4-cock  
derby," said promoters Lito Ortilaza, Rudy Salud and William Co. Contact 896-  
3545 or 895-6475 (Jona or Stephanie).

### Roligon Tukaan begins April 29

AFTER PRESENTING TWO SMASHING DERBIES AT THE ONSET OF 2006, PRO-  
moter Rolly Ligon unleashes another rich cockfest at Roligon Mega Cockpit, billed  
as Tukaan 5-cock derby on April 29, May 2, 4 and 6. No less than P2 million in  
guaranteed prize is up for grabs, said Ligon. The fastest win champion will drive  
home a brand new Toyota Innova. Entry fee is P8,800. Held last February was the  
429-entry Roligon Anniversary Derby, followed by the 360-entry Lahanang 5-cock  
derby last month. For the opening round (2-cock) on Saturday, more than 150  
participants are seeing action. Call 851-2275, 833-1638 and 852-9812 (Jona).

### Heritage Cup champion

THE PHILIPPINE HERITAGE CUP DERBY SERIES GRAND CHAMPION WILL BE  
known after tonight's 5-bulltag at the Araneta Coliseum. A prize of P400,000  
awaits the grand champion while the runner-up gets P100,000. The leading con-  
tenders are Baby Canillas (10 points); Danny Ty and William Chia (9.5), Ratty  
Campos, Edwin Aranet and Boy Gamilla (9); Anthony Linn (9), Raul Adan (9);  
Joseph Chua and Romero Yu (9). Meanwhile, the LGBA Bakbakan eliminations (4-  
bulltag) follows on April 27 also at Araneta. Only Bakbakan-banded bulltags are  
accepted. Call 926-7806, 924-5072 or 0920-5851940 (Taz Lunesco).



FROM LEFT: Ed Formoso, Peter Keller, Johnny Romualdez and Ute Huebner at the German Club in Makati.

## PFF, German Technical Cooperation sign accord

THE PHILIPPINE FOOTBALL FED-  
ERATION (PFF) and the German Tech-  
nical Cooperation (GTZ) recently

signed an agreement calling for both  
institutions to promote the GTZ's  
"peace promotion through sports"  
initiative in Mindanao and the Fifa  
World Cup in Germany this June. PFF  
president Johnny Romualdez, PFF's  
overall 2006 World Cup coordinator  
Ed Formoso, GTZ's senior program  
adviser Peter Keller and Ute Huebner-GTZ,  
advised for peace development,  
signed the agreement at the German Club  
in Makati last week.

Present at the signing were Rolf  
Salmann, Charge d'Affair of the  
Embassy of the Federal Republic of  
Germany, Volker Avenmann, direc-  
tor, Goethe Institut, Paula Guevara,

Goethe Program Coordinator and  
Linda Schaefer, GTZ consultant.

Romualdez said that the PFF will  
organize football festivals and tour-  
naments in several provinces coun-  
trywide through its various provincial  
associations to compliment GTZ's  
promotion of peace and develop-  
ment through football-only activities.

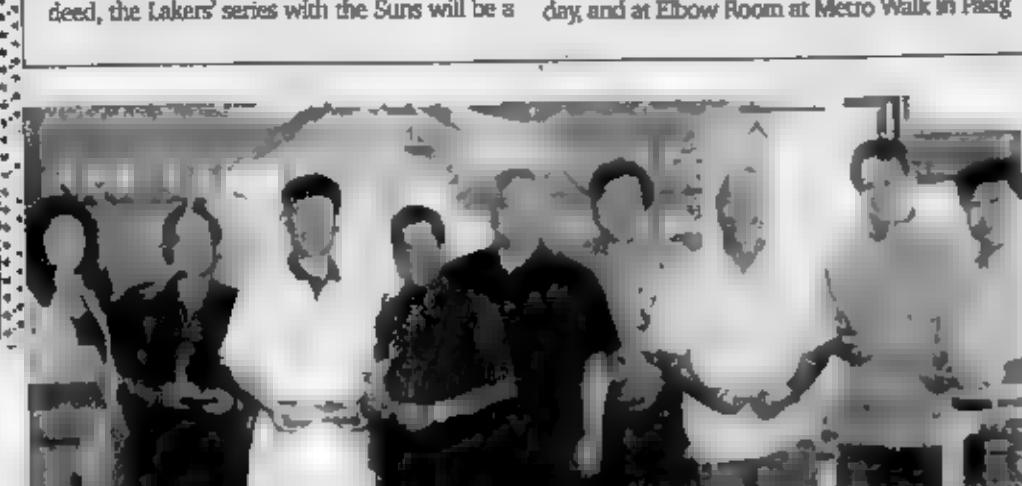
PFF-GTZ held its initial salvo in  
Davao recently with Ateneo de  
Davao emerging as the top school  
by winning four categories.

The event was organized by the  
Davao Football Association, which  
is headed by Gerry Romero Salas.

PFF-GTZ is supported in this pro-  
ject by Lufthansa Airlines, Goethe  
Institut and the Embassy of the Fed-  
eral Republic of Germany.

### Sportswriter's mother dies

TERESA STA. MARIA CORDERO, OF STA. CRUZ, LAGUNA, AND QUEZON CITY,  
and St. Theresa's College Class '56, peacefully passed away Sunday morning at St.  
Luke's Medical Center due to pancreatic cancer. She was 71. Teresa is the mother  
of The Philippine Star sportswriter Abec Cordero. She is survived by husband  
Pepito of Tarlac City, children Vicente, Ma. Aida, Ma. Adela and Enrico, and grand-  
children Diego Javier and Domino Rio. Her remains lie in state at the St. Dominic  
Church along Quezon Ave. Cremation is scheduled Thursday at 11 a.m. at Fu-  
neraria Paz on Araneta Ave.



A GOLF TOURNAMENT: Winners receive their trophies from POC chair Robert Aventajado (fifth from left) also chair of the All For Jesus Marriage Encounter Community and Angelique Lazo (first from left). From left are Capt. Kazuo Nonaka, low net champion, Michael Cheon, low net runner-up and also winner for nearest to the pin, Jaime Panganiban, low gross champion, Mariano Araneta, low gross runner-up, Roland Kapunan, longest drive, Milo Fernandez, most accurate drive and Daniel Lee, nearest to the pin.

Race 1—(Ort/Tr)—Accom-  
plice (6), River Bandit  
(6), Premier Event  
(1), JTS Friend (4)  
Race 2—(Super 6/Ort/Tr)—  
Public Express (5),  
Passing Through  
(12), Mark's Rosa (6),  
Pretty Pretty Girl (1),  
Speed Of Lightning  
(2), Real Magic (5),  
Race 3—(Penta/Ort/Tr)—  
Kim Possible

TUESDAY, APRIL 25, 2006

## Nadal rips Federer anew, keeps title

MONTREAL—SPANISH SUPERSTAR Rafael Nadal has targeted the long-standing, unbeaten clay court records of Guillermo Vilas and Bjorn Borg as he builds up to the defense of his French Open crown.

Nadal retained his Monte Carlo Masters title here on Sunday with a 6-2, 6-7 (2/7), 6-3, 7-6 (7/5) victory over Roger Federer, his fourth win over the world number one in five meetings.

It was also his 42nd successive win on clay and the teenage left-hander now stands third on the all-time list behind Guillermo Vilas (53) and Bjorn Borg (46).

"The record of Borg and Vilas? I have thought about it," said Nadal.

Sunday's success here in three hours, 49 minutes marked Federer's second defeat this season—both at the hands of the teenage Spaniard who also beat the world number one in last month's Dubai final.

"It was a very unbelievable day for me," said Nadal. "It's special to begin the clay season like this."

Beating Roger in the final is even more special, it's great."

The reigning Roland Garros champion, the world number two, also beat his rival for the second time on clay after ousting the Swiss star in the French Open semi-final last year.

But even in defeat—and with an unaccustomed 78 unforced errors—Federer analyzed the loss with calm precision.

"I have to adjust a lot to play against him," said the top seed, now with a 32-2 win-loss record in 2006.

Federer shrugged off his losing record against the talented 19-year-old, winner of eight clay crowns in 2005.

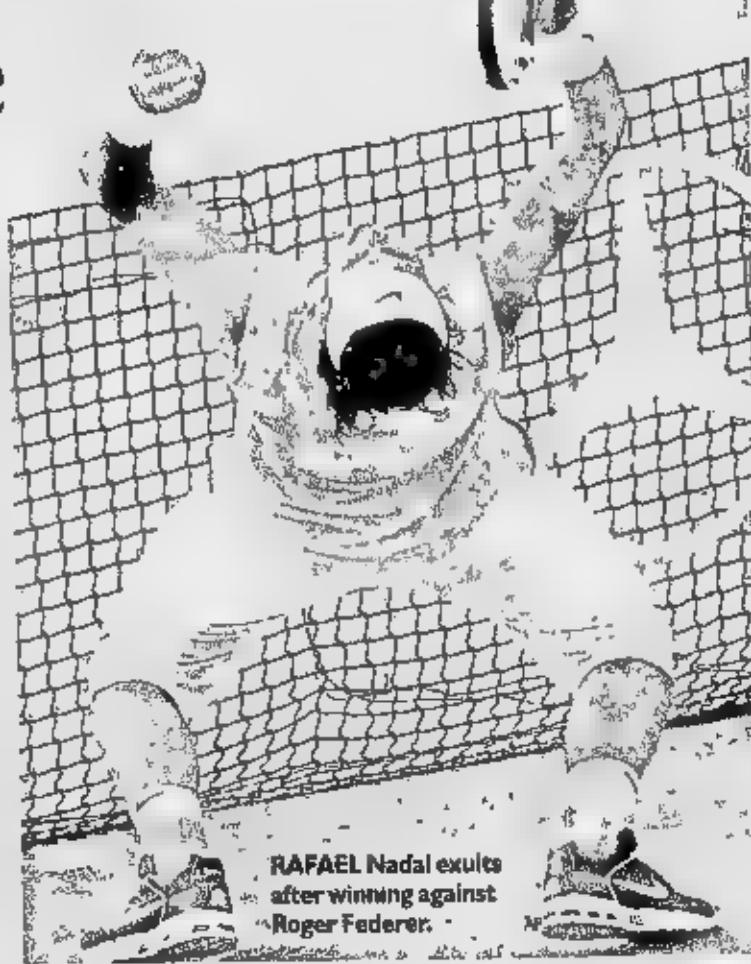
"I've had three losses in a row against him—of course I wish I could have won them," explained Federer. "But they don't break down my will or hope."

"I care more about not losing to him in Grand Slams and to be ahead more than 2,000 points in the rankings—that's what I care about."

"The record of Borg and Vilas? I have thought about it," said Nadal.

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"It was a very unbelievable day for me," said Nadal. "It's special to begin the clay season like this."



RAFAEL Nadal exults after winning against Roger Federer.

## Yim prevails as Sorenstam falters

STOCKBRIDGE, GEORGIA—South Korean Sung Ah Yim claimed her first US LPGA title on Sunday as Swedish superstar Annika Sorenstam suffered a rare final-round collapse.

Yim nabbed three birdies, including one at the 18th hole, and three

bogeys en route to an even-par 72 and a 16-under total of 272 for the \$1.4-million tournament.

Sorenstam, who won here last year by 10 shots and was seeking her 68th career title, settled for a three-over 75.

Sorenstam had fired an 8-un-

der 64 on Saturday to take a one-shot lead into the final round.

Pil-American Dorothy Delasin fired a 69 to climb to a share of 31st place at 283. Jennifer Rosales skied to a 78 and wound up tied for 55th with a 286 aggregate.

Stephen Jackson scored 18 points and reserve Fred Jones added 15 for the Pacers, who forced Vince Carter and Jason Kidd, two of New Jersey's "Big Three" into terrible shooting games.

Carter had 31 points and 13 rebounds, but shot 12-of-33 from the field. Kidd was only 2-of-11 for five points for the Nets, the Atlantic Division champions.

### Suns 107, Lakers 102

At Phoenix, Tim Thomas had 22 points and a career playoff-high 15 rebounds to help Phoenix escape with a win over Los Angeles.

Steve Nash had 20 points, in-

cluding a crucial 3-pointer with 1:07 to play, and 10 assists.

Kobe Bryant, the NBA scoring champion with 35.4 points per game, scored 22 points.

### Pistons 92, Bucks 74

At Auburn Hills, Michigan, Rasheed Wallace scored 17 of his 22 points in the first half and Richard Hamilton scored 21 to lead Detroit in Game 1 of its first-round series.

The top-seeded Pistons were so balanced offensively that they started the final quarter with four scorers in double figures, and were so tough at the other end that Milwaukee didn't have one.

### Mavs 103, Grizzlies 93

At Dallas, the Mavericks shredded the NBA's stinging defense with 60 first-half points and got key baskets when they needed them in the opener of their series with Memphis.

Dirk Nowitzki led Dallas with 31 points.

SOLAR SPORTS will air the Chicago-Miami tussle at 8 a.m. today with a replay at 8 p.m.



SUNG AH YIM: First win

## Jr qualifying slated today

JOHN KIER ABDON HOPES TO SUSTAIN HIS solid play last week that pushed him ahead of the bigger names in the boys Class A field as the qualifying tournament for the Callaway Junior World Championships resumes today at the Canlubang north and Riviera executive courses in Cavite.

Abdon is four shots clear of Mico Yee after breaking par twice in three rounds. But he will have his hands full trying to foil Yee and two other feared challengers, Miko Alejandro and pre-tournament favorite Tonton Asistio.

A disappointment last week, Asistio is in fourth place and eight shots back. He started with an 80 but shot 72s in his last two rounds to stay in the hunt.

Bambae dela Paz, meanwhile, is just a stroke up on reigning Philippine Ladies Open champ Debbie de Villa and Crystal Superal in girls Class A.

Division winners of the tourney will be given free tickets to Los Angeles by Philippine Airlines which is a major event sponsor like Samsung and Callaway.

Mia Piccio and Regine de Guzman share the top spot in girls Class B, Miguel Tabuena is just two up in boys Class C while Mia Legaspi and Rachita Vasandani are all square in girls Class E.

### Appleby tops Houston tilt

HUMBLE, TEXAS—AUSTRALIAN STUART APPLEY shot a 5-under 67 to win the Shell Houston Open on Sunday and join Tiger Woods and Phil Mickelson as the only two-time winners on the US PGA Tour this year. Appley, also the 1999 winner in Houston, finished at 19-under 289.

## Tiger takes 440-ft leap

WELLINGTON—Golf superstar Tiger Woods has taken to living dangerously in New Zealand, plunging more than 440 feet from the country's highest bungee jump, a newspaper reported Monday.

The jump on Sunday near the South Island tourist center of Queenstown came a day before he was due to take part in a rough-and-tumble stock car race, according to the Otago Daily Times.

Woods twice made the jump, including an 8.5-second free fall, from a cable car over the Nevis Valley with his caddy, New Zealander Steve Williams, who took another kind of plunge by getting married on Friday.

The 10-time majors winner, who said last week he is taking time out from the PGA tour while his father Earl is ill with cancer, is due to take part in a charity stock car race at Huntly south of Auckland later Monday.

He said last week he was prepared to give as good as he got in the 12-lap race on the tight dirt track.

Woods did not say how long he would be out of competitive golf but indicated he would definitely contest the US Open in mid-June.

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## FOXTROT



BY BILL AMEND

A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA



## MARVIN



BY TOM ARMSTRONG

PUGAD BABOY

BY PM. JUNIOR



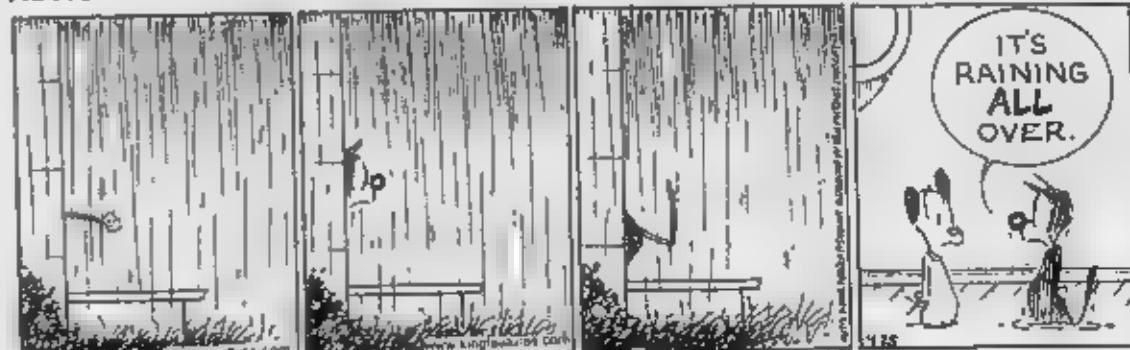
## DAILY KATIBA



BY JERRY SCOTT

MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL



## ATOMO AND WEBBOY



BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS

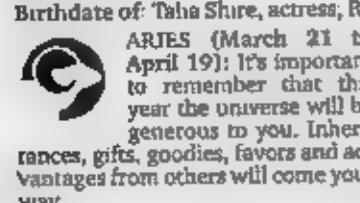


## HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

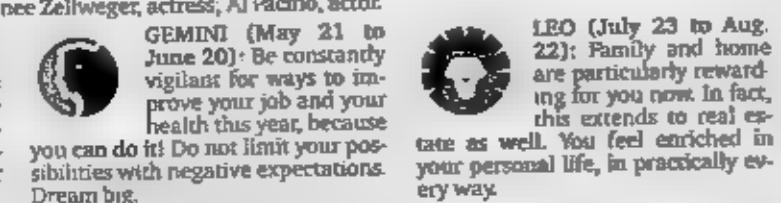
**YOU BORN TODAY:** You're intellectually bright. You're both idealistic and practical. You have strong opinions. You appreciate beauty, yet you're naturally thrifty. You like to be well-organized. By age 26, you begin to take studies and learning more seriously. You want to enlighten the world. Many new possibilities await you this year. All you have to do is choose one.

**Birthday of:** Tisha Shire, actress; Renée Zellweger, actress; Al Pacino, actor

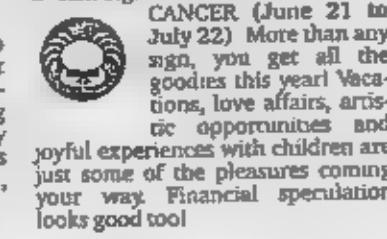


**ARIES** (March 21 to April 19): It's important to remember that this year the universe will be generous to you. Inheritances, gifts, goodies, favors and advantages from others will come your way.

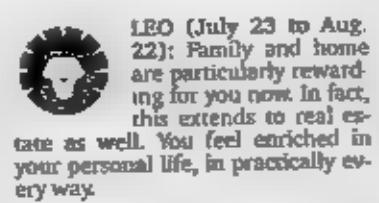
**TAURUS** (April 20 to May 20): Your closest relationships and partnerships are rewarding for you now. You truly value someone who is close to you. You feel loved. (And, indeed, you are.)



**GEMINI** (May 21 to June 20): Be constantly vigilant for ways to improve your job and your health this year, because you can do it! Do not limit your possibilities with negative expectations. Dream big.



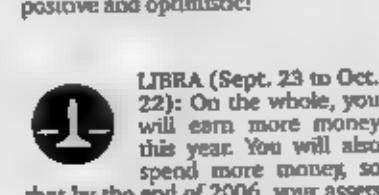
**CANCER** (June 21 to July 22): More than any sign, you get all the goodies this year. Vacations, love affairs, artistic opportunities and joyful experiences with children are just some of the pleasures coming your way. Financial speculation looks good too!



**LEO** (July 23 to Aug. 22): Family and home are particularly rewarding for you now. In fact, this extends to real estate as well. You feel enriched in your personal life, in practically every way.



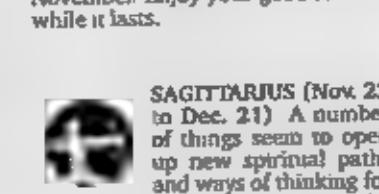
**VIRGO** (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Everything begins with a thought. First the thought, then the deed. The deed becomes habit, and habit hardens into character. Your thoughts are who you are. This year, your thoughts are positive and optimistic!



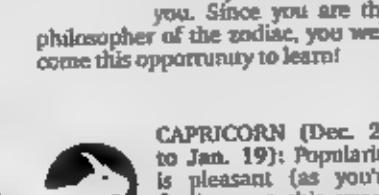
**LIBRA** (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): On the whole, you will earn more money this year. You will also spend more money, so that by the end of 2006, your assets will have increased.



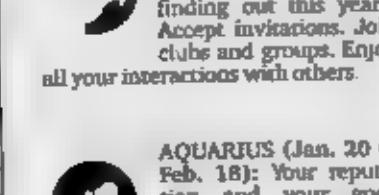
**SCORPIO** (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Once every 12 years, lucky Jupiter is in your sign. That is happening for you now. It will stay there until November. Enjoy your good fortune while it lasts.



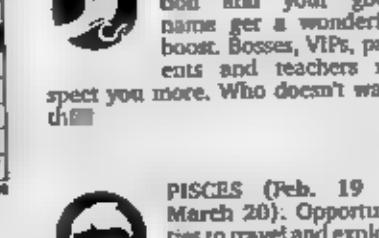
**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): A number of things seem to open up new spiritual paths and ways of thinking for you. Since you are the philosopher of the zodiac, you welcome this opportunity to learn!



**CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Popularity is pleasant (as you're finding out this year). Accept invitations. Join clubs and groups. Enjoy all your interactions with others.



**AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Your reputation and your good name get a wonderful boost. Bosses, VIPs, parents and teachers respect you more. Who doesn't want that?

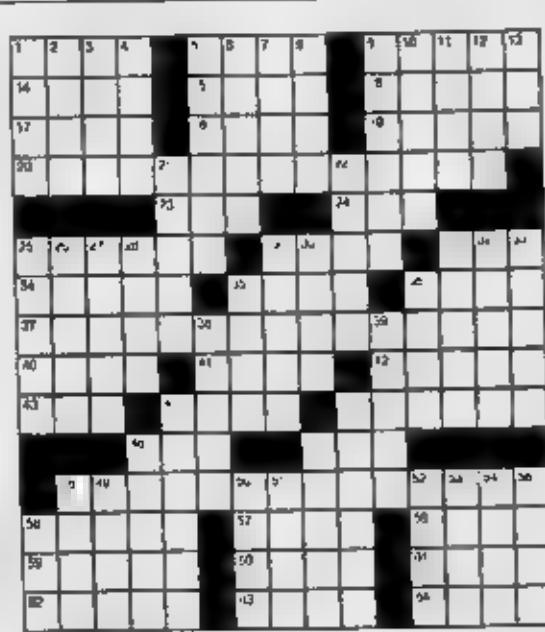


**PISCES** (Feb. 19 to March 20): Opportunities to travel and explore publishing, the media and educational avenues will continue to come your way this year. Grab as much as you can!

## DAILY CROSSWORD

## ACROSS

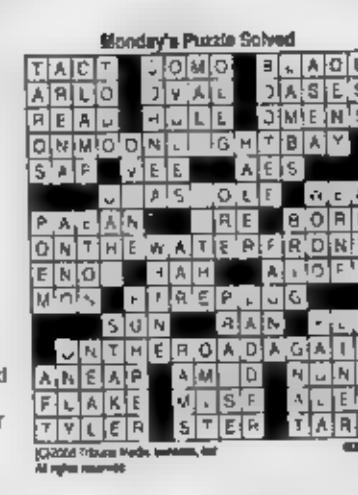
1 Tiny tigers  
5 Filled with wonder  
9 Bewildered  
14 Shrek, for one  
16 Learning method  
16 Emu's idn  
17 Disembarked  
18 Up in smoke  
19 Boggy area  
20 In deep space  
23 Long in the sticks  
24 Commandant  
25 Have a lofty goal  
29 Merry sounds  
31 Harper Valley QTP  
34 Sounds of anguish  
35 Singular performances  
36 Emerald isle  
37 Really in the sticks  
40 Twilight times  
41 Gravy base  
42 Absolutely null  
43 Lipstick shade  
44 Martians island  
45 Walked deliberately  
46 Skater  
Babilonia  
47 Shad delicacy  
48 Not visible from the crow's nest  
56 Bakery loaf  
57 Current  
58 City on seven  
59 Top tubby  
60 Prevailing trend  
61 Had down pat  
62 Flutty poplar  
63 Battle souvenier  
64 Dispatched



By Diane C. Batten

Columbus, MD

## Monday's Puzzle Solved



7 Sicilian sputter  
8 Bambi's folks  
9 Wership assemblage  
10 Spring occurrences  
11 Antioxins  
12 Piece of cake!  
13 Blond shade  
21 Trunk  
22 Hindu's slr  
25 Fossil resin  
26 Vino from Verona  
27 Took measured steps  
28 Leads a bayer  
29 Not so interesting  
30 Trebek or Karras  
31 BYL  
32 Having prongs  
33 Gide or Previn  
35 Peppin's portico  
36 Peppin's portico  
38 Apples and oranges  
39 Computer command  
41 Vegetable plot  
42 Micro ready  
46 Mock playfully  
47 Valerie Harper role  
48 Peepers  
49 Second to a prez  
50 Crude shellers

51 Tale of  
52 Irritato  
53 Type of defense  
54 Oracle's sign  
55 Squeeze  
56 Silvery squeezer

## KIKO MACHINE



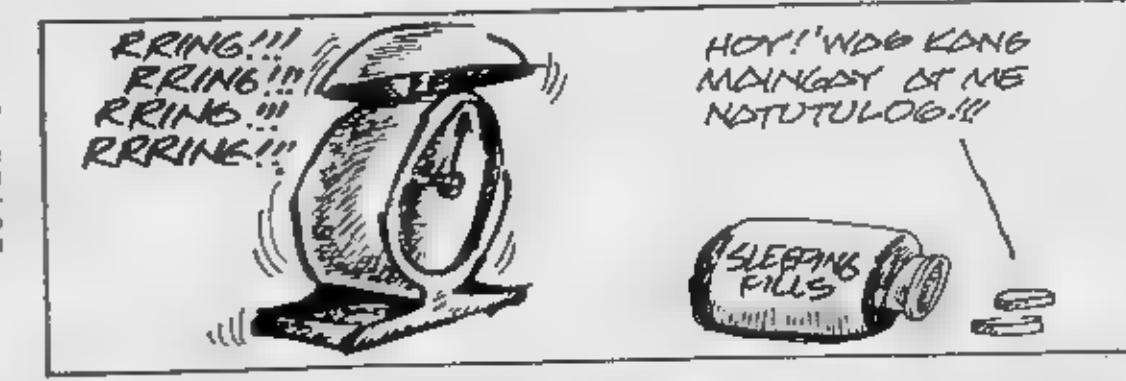
BY MANIX ABRERA

## LOVEKNOTS



BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

## TULDOK



BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

## ENTERTAINMENT

Text us your feedback: inquirer ent.name/age/city/message to 22B7 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)



JETT Pangan, foreground, and Francis Reyes of The Dawn in "Tubod ng Dati"

## Seeing stars in ... digital

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

MORE MAINSTREAM actors are starring in this year's Cinemalaya Independent Film Festival entries, said Robbie Tan, chair of the monitoring committee.

Tan provided INQUIRER Entertainment with a list.

"At least two stars, Meryl Soriano and Mark Gil, are appearing in two films," Tan said.

Soriano had so enjoyed working in last year's Cinemalaya entry, "Roomboy" (for which she won Best Actress), Tan added, that she readily accepted two entries this time. Ron Bryant's "Isang ikot ng Mundo sa Rotonda" and Dado C. Lumibao and Bong Ramos' "In Da Red Korner" (formerly, "Ng pin ni Doring")

Gil, Soriano's co-star in "Rotonda," has another entry, Adolfo Al ix Jr.'s "Donsol."

"The Gil family is well represented this year," Tan said. "The lead actor in 'Donsol' is Sid Lucero, Mark's son [with actress Bing Pimentel]. Playing Sid's mother is Jaclyn Jose, Mark's former partner Cherie Gil, Mark's sister, is also in the cast."

Another Gil rela-

The Gil clan is very well represented in Cinemalaya '06

tive, Gina Alajar, is in Vic Acedillo Jr. and Benji Garcia's "Bataan Sa Paang Palay." Alajar is the wife of Lucero's uncle, Michael de Mesa, who starred in last year's "Big Time."

Tan jested, "It's a family affair."

Other stars in "Donsol" are Angel Aquino, Bembol Rocco,

SEEING/A2-3

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### GALLERIA

1 BASIC INSTINCT 2 • THX 12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00	6 EIGHT BELOW 11:40 2:15 4:50 7:25 10:00
2 PAMAHIN 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00	7 THE HILLS HAVE EYES 12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00
3 SUBMERGED 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50	8 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE 1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00
4 THE COOLER 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00	9 ICE AGE 2 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50
5 D'LUCKY ONES 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50	10 MOMENTS OF LOVE 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

### ERMITA

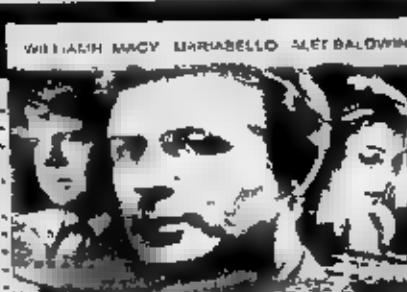
1 ICE AGE 2 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 9:50	5 SUBMERGED 12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00
3 AMERICAN SOLDIER BASIC INSTINCT 2 5:15 7:35 10:00	6 EIGHT BELOW 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
4 PAMAHIN 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50	7 D'LUCKY ONES 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
1 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE 1:00 3:40 5:20 9:00	5 THE HILLS HAVE EYES 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00

### METRO EAST

1 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE 1:00 3:40 5:20 9:00	5 THE HILLS HAVE EYES 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00
2 ICE AGE 2 12:20 2:30 4:40 6:50 9:00	6 MOMENTS OF LOVE 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00
9 D'LUCKY ONES 11:25 1:50 4:15 5:40 9:05	7 EIGHT BELOW 1:00 3:40 6:20 9:00
4 BASIC INSTINCT 2 12:20 2:30 4:40 6:50 9:00	8 PAMAHIN 11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05

### NOVALICHES

1 D'LUCKY ONES 2 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE 3 EIGHT BELOW	4 PAMAHIN 5 BASIC INSTINCT 2
1 MOMENTS OF LOVE 2 D'LUCKY ONES 3 RESERVE	1 SUBMERGED 2 EIGHT BELOW 3 PAMAHIN 4 D'LUCKY ONES
4 RESERVE	ICE AGE 2 BANDIDAS EIGHT BELOW RESERVED TRISTAN & ISOLDE SUBMERGED JUST FRIENDS FINAL DESTINATION 3 PAMAHIN D'LUCKY ONES MOMENTS OF LOVE AMERICAN SOLDIERS
	TRISTAN & ISOLDE SUBMERGED JUST FRIENDS FINAL DESTINATION 3 PAMAHIN D'LUCKY ONES MOMENTS OF LOVE AMERICAN SOLDIERS



### Exclusives

The Cooler 12 international awards from various international award-giving bodies

Bernie Loolz (Macy) is the unluckiest man in Las Vegas. His bad luck is contagious. Wanting to knock out their highest rollers, The Stargazer Hotel and Casino, one of the last mob-run casinos in town, decides to use Bernie as a "Cooler" to reverse their lucky streak. The scheme goes well until Bernie falls in love with a cocktail waitress, Natalie (Bell). She becomes his "lucky lady," much to the alarm of the casino's crooked director (Baldwin), who is dead set on putting an end to the romance and Bernie's new-found luck.

Robinsons Movieworld...

GALLERIA  
Opens April 19

Subs for MTRCB Rating

### SCREENING

### STA. ROSA

1 NORTH COUNTRY 2 EIGHT BELOW 3 PAMAHIN 4 D'LUCKY ONES	1 EIGHT BELOW 2 PAMAHIN 3 NORTH COUNTRY 4 D'LUCKY ONES 5 THE HILLS HAVE EYES
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### DASMARINAS

1 EIGHT BELOW 2 BASIC INSTINCT 2 3 PAMAHIN 4 D'LUCKY ONES 5 NORTH COUNTRY	1 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE 2 PAMAHIN 3 D'LUCKY ONES 4 EIGHT BELOW
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### IMUS

1 EIGHT BELOW 2 GRANDMA'S BOY 3 EIGHT BELOW 4 D'LUCKY ONES	1 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE 2 D'LUCKY ONES 3 PAMAHIN 4 BASIC INSTINCT 2 5 JUST FRIENDS 6 EIGHT BELOW
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### BACOLOD

1 EIGHT BELOW 2 D'LUCKY ONES 3 ULTRAVIOLET 4 THE HILLS HAVE EYES 5 HOUSE OF FURY 6 ICE AGE 2	1 ULTRAVIOLET 2 D'LUCKY ONES 3 PAMAHIN 4 EIGHT BELOW 5 SHE'S THE MAN 6 NANNY MCPHEE
---	--

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**A2-4**

### FEEDBACK

By **John**

Winners, winners!

THE STARS OF '66  
IN our April 19 quiz are (from left in the photograph): Boy Alano, Sarah Calvin, Shirley Moreno, German Moreno, Ramil Rodriguez, Blanca Gomez, Jose Morelos, Rosemarie Sonora, Pepito Rodriguez, Edgar Salcedo and Nori Dalisay

And the winners are Rommel C. Reyes of Concepcion, Malabon, Marietta M. Adriano of Parañaque City; and Eloisa C. Mangulabnan of San Fernando, Pampanga.

Rommel, Marietta and Eloisa sent the first correct answers.

INQUIRER Entertainment received more than 50 entries by e-mail, from readers as far away as Dipolog and Zamboanga in the south and Tuguegarao in the north

The winners will please come to the INQUIRER offices within the week, except Thursday, to claim your prizes.

Call Kat Reyes, 897-8808 loc. 363.

### Why show

#### 'Da Vinci'?

From Eva Rodriguez (emrod3@yahoo.com), UP Diliman.

Why are we showing "Da Vinci Code" in the Philippines when we are a Christian nation? Aside from the errors he committed in art and historical fact, Dan Brown presents Jesus Christ as a mere man whose divinity is determined by man's election. This is very much against our Christian belief—I would dare say even blasphemous.

As a Catholic, I'm calling on MTRCB and all Christian communities and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, to do everything possible to stop the showing of "The Da Vinci Code" here. Or at least provide the faithful with guidelines as to how it should be digested.

#### I agree

From Henry Estrada (henry.estrada@wfp.org), Rome, Italy

I fully agree (along with regular viewers here in Italy) that Charlize should have been declared the "brightest" in "Little Big Star."

She's so gifted and her singing style, projection, confidence and voice quality would put to shame many other singers.

#### Me, too

From Mars Sahulga (sahulga@gmx.net), Floriangasse 70, 1080, Vienna:

I support the feedback of Edison David regarding the results of the "Little Big Star." A lot of immigrants here in Vienna watch the show. This is to inform the management of the ABS-CBN that we are very disappointed! Charlize should have won.

### WHEN A STRANGER CALLS

TONIGHT at 7:30 p.m.  
The Podium Cinema 2

Made possible by: 96.3WRock

Regular showing starts APRIL 21

MTRCB Rating PG-13

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<b>THE STRANGER</b>	<b>FINAL DESTINATION 3</b>	<b>PAMAHIN</b>
<b>ICE AGE 2</b>	<b>ICE AGE 2</b>	<b>JUST FRIENDS</b>
<b>PAMAHIN</b>	<b>PAMAHIN</b>	<b>EIGHT BELOW</b>
<b>EIGHT BELOW</b>	<b>EIGHT BELOW</b>	<b>ICE AGE 2</b>
<b>SM CITY DASMARINAS</b>	<b>PAMAHIN</b>	<b>MOMENTS OF LOVE</b>
<b>1 PAMAHIN</b>	<b>2 PAMAHIN</b>	<b>D'LUCKY ONES</b>
<b>2 ICE AGE 2</b>	<b>3 D'LUCKY ONES</b>	<b>EIGHT BELOW</b>
<b>3 EIGHT BELOW</b>	<b>4 EIGHT BELOW</b>	<b>PAMAHIN</b>
<b>4 D'LUCKY ONES</b>	<b>5 D'LUCKY ONES</b>	<b>D'LUCKY ONES</b>
<b>5 PAMAHIN</b>	<b>6 PAMAHIN</b>	<b>EIGHT BELOW</b>
<b>6 ICE AGE 2</b>	<b>7 PAMAHIN</b>	<b>ICE AGE 2</b>
<b>7 EIGHT BELOW</b>	<b>8 PAMAHIN</b>	<b>EIGHT BELOW</b>
<b>8 D'LUCKY ONES</b>	<b>9 PAMAHIN</b>	<b>EIGHT BELOW</b>
<b>9 PAMAHIN</b>	<b>10 PAMAHIN</b>	<b>EIGHT BELOW</b>
<b>10 ICE AGE 2</b>	<b>11 PAMAHIN</b>	<b>EIGHT BELOW</b>
<b>11 EIGHT BELOW</b>	<b>12 PAMAHIN</b>	<b>EIGHT BELOW</b>
<b>12 D'LUCKY ONES</b>	<b>13 PAMAHIN</b>	<b>EIGHT BELOW</b>
<b>13 PAMAHIN</b>	<b>14 PAMAHIN</b>	<b>EIGHT BELOW</b>
<b>14 ICE AGE 2</b>	<b>15 PAMAHIN</b>	<b>EIGHT BELOW</b>
<b>15 EIGHT BELOW</b>	<b>16 PAMAHIN</b>	<b>EIGHT BELOW</b>
<b>16 D'LUCKY ONES</b>	<b>17 PAMAHIN</b>	<b>EIGHT BELOW</b>
<b>17 PAMAHIN</b>	<b>18 PAMAHIN</b>	<b>EIGHT BELOW</b>
<b></b>		

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# BUSINESS

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**2**  
NETON

## GMA extends SPV law by 2 years



MEGAWORLD chair Andrew Tan briefs President Macapagal-Arroyo on the property firm's projects in Fort Bonifacio after the ceremonial ringing of the opening bell at the Philippine Stock Exchange. Megaworld listed yesterday the additional shares it offered to International investors.

### Buyers of banks' soured assets to get tax perks

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO YESTERDAY signed into law a measure reviving tax breaks for buyers of banks' soured assets for another two years, a move which officials hope will spur more sales of bad loans.

Ms. Arroyo signed the law amending the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) Act at the Philippine Stock Exchange amid cheers from lawmakers, government officials and business executives before ringing the opening bell to start the day's trading.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has said it expected commercial banks to sell more than P100 billion worth of bad loans over the next two years.

Under the amended law, the deadline for the creation of asset management firms enti-

ted to tax breaks will be 18 months from when it takes effect, which is expected shortly. The original deadline was Sept. 19, 2004.

The original law, which expired in April 2005, exempted buyers of banks' assets from paying certain transaction-related and withholding taxes. It also halved certain transfer and land registration fees. These included the documentary stamp tax, capital gains tax and VAT (expanded value-added tax).

The previous SPV law allowed banks to clean up about P95 billion in bad assets before it expired April last year.

Officials have said that if all soured assets were unloaded, the bad loan ratio of Philippine banks should fall from around 8.3 percent of total loans to 6.5 percent, although that would still be higher than the 4 percent

GMA/B2

### 10-YEAR EXPANSION PLAN

## Megaworld allots P47B for new projects

PROPERTY DEVELOPER MEGAWORLD Corp. said it will spend roughly P47 billion over the next 7 to 10 years, mostly to build office spaces catering to the expanding call center industry, Megaworld chair and president Andrew Tan said yesterday.

Following the company's ceremonial listing of additional shares at the Philippine Stock Exchange in Ayala, Makati City, Tan said that over the next five years, Megaworld will build 400,000 square meters of business process outsourcing (BPO)-ready offices, good for 176,000 call center

workers on its flagship project at Eastwood City in Libis, on McKinley Hill in Fort Bonifacio and on Newport City in Pasay City.

Of the P47 billion, some P20 billion will be spent for these BPO-related offices and retail properties to expand rental income.

Tan said 80 percent of the proceeds from its recent public offer of primary and secondary shares would be used to build the BPO office spaces, which will position the company as a leading player in BPO office development and the residential condominium

market.

"We will take Megaworld to the next level and further enhance its value," Tan said during his speech at Megaworld's listing rites at the Ayala trading floor.

Megaworld raised a total of P5.4 billion for itself and selling shareholder US investment fund Colony-CB Richard Ellis, from a public offer of 3.9 billion primary and secondary shares at P1.38 each. It was the first property company to return to the capital market for funds since the

MEGAWORLD/B2

## 91-day T-bill rate up slightly to 4.62%

By Michelle V. Remo

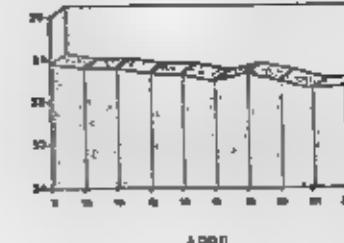
THE BELLWETHER 91-DAY TREASURY BILL rate inched up slightly to 4.62 percent yesterday after nearly reaching a four-year low last week as investors chose to bid for securities that gave them higher yields.

The new rate for the 91-day bills was 2 basis points higher than the 4.6 percent recorded during last week's auctions.

The three-month government securities were still oversubscribed, with tenders reaching P1.62 billion, but the amount of bids for

91-DAY/B2

### INDICATORS CURRENCIES



APRIL

## PESO-DOLLAR RATE

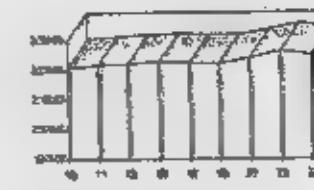
P 51.635 = \$1  
As of 5 p.m., April 24, 2006

V 117.61 = \$1  
As of 5 p.m., April 21, 2006

GOLD: \$632.50-\$633.00

per ounce Hong Kong, April 24, 2006

## STOCK MARKET



(See stock market report on Page B4)

### Stocks down on profit-taking

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.56-PERCENT lower yesterday as soaring oil prices sparked a round of profit-taking after the market hit near seven-year highs, dealers said.

They said the correction was to have been expected and the latest spike in oil prices to above \$75 a barrel provided the excuse but overall the tone remained positive, with investors expecting strong first-quarter corporate results.

STOCKS/B2

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# Cebu makes big push as investment, tourism hub

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND the private sector in Cebu yesterday kicked off efforts to push for the further development of the island province as an investment and tourism hub that will rival Metro Manila.

Provincial and city officials gathered with representatives of the Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry with the Metro Manila launch of the 11th Cebu Business Month (CBM) at the Hotel Intercontinental in Makati City. CBM was launched in Cebu City last March.

Wilson P. Ng, chair of CBM 2006, said the festivities had been an effective crowd-drawer for local entrepreneurs as well as international businesses and that it had "accorded a big boost" to the economy in the Visayas.

Themed "Invest Cebu," this year's CBM will promote the province as an investment haven in the country with tourism and information and commun-

## Execs say island to rival Metro Manila

ication technology ventures as main drivers of growth.

"We are promoting the concept of Greater Cebu, which means Cebu would not only be an end destination but would also be a catalyst in promoting the general area (of the Visayas)," Ng said.

Ng said the festival was also aimed at promoting the role of small- and medium-sized enterprises in enhancing Cebu's global competitiveness.

Joel Mari Yu, head of the Cebu Investment Promotions Center, said Cebu accounted for \$4.7 billion in ex-

ports last year or about 10 percent of the country's total export earnings.

"That is an improvement from about \$3 billion five years ago and it is quite significant considering that we represent just 4 percent of the country's entire population," Yu said.

He said foreign direct investments had grown in number from about 200 in 2001 to at least 300 last year. However, he did not give the amounts of investments.

"Cebu is very accessible from other countries with daily flights to and from Tokyo, Singapore, Hong Kong and Kuala Lumpur," Yu said. "There are also flights to and from Seoul, Taipei and Qatar three times a week."

Yu said Cebu was very competitive in that the cost of handling a container of cargo is just half of what it costs in Manila's sea ports while housing expenses for foreign executives were 20 percent to 50 percent cheaper than in the national capital.

"As for labor cost, minimum wage in Cebu is just P215 a day compared to P320 in Metro Manila," he added.

## Stocks ...

From page B1

that became nonperforming at the end of 2004 from June 30, 2002, under the original law.

Commercial banks' nonperforming loans stood at P158.68 billion as of the end of February, down 1.5 percent from P161.12 billion in January.

Witnessing the signing of the SPV amendment were Sen. Ralph Recto, chair of the Senate committee on ways and means, and Representatives Jaime Lopez, Jose Carlos Lacson and Luis Villafuerte. With a report from Reuters

"Our medium-term objective is to bring down the NPL ratio to pre-crisis or 1997 levels of 4 percent," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said.

The country's bad loan ratio peaked at 18.81 percent in October 2001.

The new law, aimed at freeing up banks' resources to spur more lending and economic growth, broadens the coverage of soured assets eligible for investment and tax perks to those

## Megaworld allots P47B for new projects

President Macapagal-Arroyo graced Megaworld's listing at the Ayala trading floor yesterday, ringing the opening bell at 9:10 a.m., 20 minutes before the market's official morning run. Ms Macapagal also signed at the trading floor yesterday amendments to the Special Purpose Vehicle law. (See story on this page B1)

Aside from BPO office spaces, Megaworld is launching in the third quarter its \$137-million mass transit-oriented residential condominium project dubbed "Manhattan Garden City." Linked to the MRT-3 and LRT-2 mass transit lines at the Araneta Center in Cubao, Quezon City, Manhattan Garden will consist of 17 towers and 6,000 units on a four-hectare site. Elizabeth L Sanchez

Look, those same poor members pay for the salaries of the "consultants" who are doing the job of the president who, in turn, spends the members' money on travels abroad and a first-class office on Ayala Avenue in Makati.

## Million tanks to you

UNKNOWN TO ITS MILLIONS OF WORKING-CLASS, hard-up members, the SSS is maintaining a costly office on Ayala Ave. in Makati.

To everybody in the real estate sector, that is the most expensive street in the most expensive business district in the most expensive city in this country.

Now the benefits that the SSS gives out to the members have not improved much under the present management, headed by its president Corazon de la Paz.

Yet the SSS, from what I heard from insiders, spends for the high-end office anywhere from P2 million to P4 million a month.

And to top this, the SSS is NOT the one using it. Occupying the multimillion-peso rented office is an international organization based in Switzerland.

My info is that it is an association of pension funds. It so happens that Dela Paz is also the president of the international organization.

On behalf of the millions of SSS members, here's a little question: Did the commissioners of the SSS approve the use of SSS funds for the office?

\*\*\*

FROM WHAT we hear, anyway, being the president of that "international organization," Dela Paz has been travelling a lot abroad during the past two years or so.

And guess what, insiders are claiming that she has also been charging those travels to the SSS.

Her absences are well known inside the SSS. Thus, to do her hands-on job, she hired highly paid consultants—THREE of them.

They are Arturo San Gabriel, Luisito Sison and Nazario Cabuquit, each getting a "salary" of P150,000 a month—or about P1.8 million a year.

Many of the SSS members cannot call that amount "salary." It is, to them, a fortune. Many of them do not even earn half of that amount in a year.

Are you telling us that Malacañang does not even move even a little finger against what could be a brazen display of graft? And what is the Ombudsman doing?

Look, those same poor members pay for the salaries of the "consultants" who are doing the job of the president who, in turn, spends the members' money on travels abroad and a first-class office on Ayala Avenue in Makati.

And it seems that all that the SM group has to do is use political influence.

The Palace, under this cute administration, is not lifting a finger to fight the SM group's plan for its own Banco de Oro (9th largest) to swallow up the whole of EPCIB (3rd largest).

The market continues to have a positive view (on the government's credit risk) brought by the recent fiscal report," Cruz said. The government earlier announced that its budget deficit for the first quarter stood at P67.6 billion, or lower than the program of P71.8 billion, due to higher-than-expected revenue collection. For 2006, the government expects to trim its full-year deficit to P125 billion from last year's P146.8 billion.

Cruz said the Treasury was considering reducing the volume of securities it would offer in the third quarter. The government is issuing P69 billion worth of treasury bills and bonds in the second quarter. It auctioned P132.6 billion worth of debt paper in the third quarter of last year.

And the 91-day bills was still much lower than those for the 182- and 364-day government securities.

Tenders for the 182-day paper reached P3.43 billion, while that for the 364-day bills amounted to P4.96 billion. The government borrows P1 billion for each maturity during the auctions. The Bureau of Treasury's auction committee accepted P3 billion worth of bids.

The six-month and one-year securities both fetched lower rates, with the 182-day rate setting at 5.337 percent, 16.2 basis points lower than last week's, and the 364-day yield ending 28 basis points lower at 5.81 percent.

As expected, the market showed its preference for longer-dated bills, which could give them greater yields. The supply (of T-

bills) is still very limited compared with demand," National Treasurer Omar Cruz said in a briefing after the auctions.

He said there were P4.56 billion worth of maturing government securities this week, an amount seen to add up to the market's already high liquidity. Some banks use the proceeds from government securities to reinvest in treasury bills and bonds.

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## Philex surpasses all expectations

### MR. BEARBULL



SOME READERS WERE DISAPPOINTED THAT I did not write a humorous article about our vacation to Singapore but nothing funny happened there, except in the plane. Singapore Airlines provides small TV sets in the back of every seat. You also have a video control with no instructions and a set of headphones. I am absolutely hopeless with remote controls but it did not take long for my daughter to figure out how everything worked. So when we started using the video controls in the plane, my daughter was soon playing games, answering quizzes and watching movies. All I could get was the altitude, air speed, the outside temperature and the estimated time of arrival in Manila.

Too proud to ask for her help, I started jabbing at the numerous colored buttons, purely at random. The first one lit up our three seats and switched off the starboard engine. The second one tilted my seat back 15 degrees and upset hot coffee over the unfortunate passenger behind me. But it was the third button that gave me a terrible fright. An old lady had just gone into the toilet about five rows in front of me. I jabbed the blue button twice and there followed a terrible sucking sound and a loud scream. When the cabin crew eventually forced the door open, all they found was a pair of shoes. I hope I was not responsible.

THE FIRST quarter results from Philex surpassed my wildest expectations. I had calculated P450 million for the first quarter but when I returned from Singapore, I noticed that there were two shipments in March instead of one, so I increased my forecast to P550 million plus.

Next day, the figures appeared on Bloomberg as P574.5 million, so now my P2 billion becomes more attainable. The analyst briefing is on

Thursday and it should be enlightening.

The shares rose to P4.25 and although my P5.60 target remains for next year, I told my subscribers and clients who bought at P1.64 to P1.80, to sell half at P4 or better. This is a sensible defensive play that I adopted because I am risk-averse and this leaves them with the other half costing less than zero. If PX goes down, they can buy it back cheaper. If it goes up, they have a huge profit plus their original capital to invest in my next hot stock.

The commodity markets have been rising exponentially in recent months and all the charts are so overbought that we should have

a correction soon. Gold is at a 25-year high but copper, zinc, aluminum, nickel, platinum and silver are mostly at all-time highs, climbing vertically on the charts. Volatility has become extreme. On Thursday night, gold opened \$14 an ounce higher but closed \$12 lower, a reversal of \$26 in one day. Silver, at its highest ever, had its May futures delivery fall by the greatest amount since 1983. It is like being in a sea with a tsunami approaching. If Nostradamus were alive, he would not venture to predict what would happen in the next few weeks. Nor will I.

Over the long term, I am more confident because China's GDP in the first quarter grew by 10.2 percent and industrial production by 16.2 percent. India is also expanding its infrastructure rapidly and is aiming at double-digit growth. These two countries account for 2.4 billion people, 40 percent of the world's population. Japan has at last turned the corner and is now hiring workers and expanding production after 12 years of stagnation. Japan is the world's second largest economy so the global outlook remains favorable.

As mining share prices closely mirror the metal prices, you have to be on your mettle. The simplest way is to subscribe to Kirc.com and you will receive two newsletters a day, at 12-hour intervals. I do not know how you go about buying gold in the Philippines but shares have much greater volatility and are far easier to trade.

Non-producing mining shares went up in sympathy but I regard them as a poor second choice. Look what happened to Manila Mining. MA went up 0.34 after the company announced it had permission to explore 740 hectares in Surigao del Norte, its Kalayaan mine adjacent to Philex. Two days later, Environment Secretary Reyes angrily denied the company's claim and threatened to file civil and criminal charges against the company. MA has fallen to 0.24 and speculators got burned.

It has since transpired that MA has a permit

issued by the previous secretary and it is conceivable that the MA people thought it was valid. To prevent further escalation and defuse the situation, it would be prudent for MA to apologize to Secretary Reyes for its blunder. Then, after a suitable period, he might be inclined to endorse the permit, which is in his office awaiting approval. I would not sell MA at this price.

My other hot stock, Paxis has risen from its IPO price (adjusted for the one to two rights issue at P1) by a factor of 3.5 times. It has surged from P2.80 to P9.60 in less than two years. Profits rose by 176 percent to P339 million in 2005 from P123 million in the previous year. The number of seats increased from 800 at the beginning of 2004 to over 3,000 at the end of 2005.

The call center industry is expected to grow by 50 percent to 60 percent this year and continue growing until 2010. With nothing to fear, I did not advise subscribers to sell any of their holdings. The company is expanding horizontally, vertically and geographically. It is looking to Europe and Australia, where it is planning a P10-million acquisition. This will broaden the company's product and service offering in the business processing outsourcing sector. I will re-establish my contact with PAX and comment further next week on its future.

The Phisix has risen to a 7-year high, largely due to a P45 rise in TEL to P200. I recommended this stock back in 2003 at P226 so it has multiplied nine times, a fear that I do not expect to repeat. Teves and his team have done well on the fiscal side and Tercangoo has done a good job running the central bank. Interest rates are at an 11-year low and balancing the budget by 2008 seems possible so we might expect an upgrade before the year end.

The Supreme Court's unanimous decision to disallow EO 404 opens the door to further discussions on the fertilizer scam and the Gaci tapes. The peaceful political situation, which had prevailed for several months looks like coming to an end. Another attempt to unseat President Arroyo looks likely in May and June and whatever the result, foreign investors will be deterred and local investors will be tempted to cash in some of their profits. I feel investors should be taking profits and be at least 50 percent liquid at this point.

Due to May 1 being a holiday, my next article will appear on Wednesday, May 3. Mrbearbull@hotmail.com

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The commodity markets have been rising exponentially in recent months and all the charts are so overbought that we should have

a correction soon. Gold is at a 25-year high but copper, zinc, aluminum, nickel, platinum and silver are mostly at all-time highs, climbing vertically on the charts. Volatility has become extreme. On Thursday night, gold opened \$14 an ounce higher but closed \$12 lower, a reversal of \$26 in one day. Silver, at its highest ever, had its May futures delivery fall by the greatest amount since 1983. It is like being in a sea with a tsunami approaching. If Nostradamus were alive, he would not venture to predict what would happen in the next few weeks. Nor will I.

Over the long term, I am more confident because China's GDP in the first quarter grew by 10.2 percent and industrial production by 16.2 percent. India is also expanding its infrastructure rapidly and is aiming at double-digit growth. These two countries account for 2.4 billion people, 40 percent of the world's population. Japan has at last turned the corner and is now hiring workers and expanding production after 12 years of stagnation. Japan is the world's second largest economy so the global outlook remains favorable.

As mining share prices closely mirror the metal prices, you have to be on your mettle. The simplest way is to subscribe to Kirc.com and you will receive two newsletters a day, at 12-hour intervals. I do not know how you go about buying gold in the Philippines but shares have much greater volatility and are far easier to trade.

Non-producing mining shares went up in sympathy but I regard them as a poor second choice. Look what happened to Manila Mining. MA went up 0.34 after the company announced it had permission to explore 740 hectares in Surigao del Norte, its Kalayaan mine adjacent to Philex. Two days later, Environment Secretary Reyes angrily denied the company's claim and threatened to file civil and criminal charges against the company. MA has fallen to 0.24 and speculators got burned.

It has since transpired that MA has a permit

## Ayala expanding Cebu ventures

### P2B set aside for more commercial space, residential development

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE AYALA GROUP IS EARMARKING P2 billion for capital expenditure this year to expand projects in Cebu, including a high-end residential development and additional commercial space in its mall complex in the city.

Francis O. Monera, chief operating officer of Ayala Land Inc.'s Visayas and Mindanao group, said in an interview the firm's investments in 2006 would cover the second phase of its Amara residential development.

Monera was in Makati City yesterday to represent the Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry during the Metro Manila leg of the promotion of the Cebu Business Month in June.

The official said phase 2 of Amara, which would be launched later this year, would cover five hectares of property to be subdivided into 96 lots.

"We have allotted at least P1 billion for development costs," he said.

The official added that Phase 2's launching would follow last year's "blockbuster" launch of the first of five phases covering 46 hectares in Liloan town.

"Phase 1, which has 112 lots, was sold out within two weeks after we launched it last October," Monera said. "Lots were priced be-

tween P5,800 and P9,800 per square meter."

Also, he said the Ayala group was adding 13,500 square meters of commercial space in its Ayala Center at a cost of P800 million.

The additional space would be about a fifth of the mall complex's existing 70,000 square meters.

"There is a big demand for retail space in Cebu," Monera said. "The additional space would be available for occupancy in the first quarter of 2007."

Ayala's development projects in the island include the 50-hectare Cebu Business Park which hosts the Ayala Center and the Marriott Hotel; the Cebu Sports Club, and the 24-hectare Asia Town information technology park.

Registered with the Philippine Economic Zone Authority, Asia Town hosts electronics manufacturers, including NEC and Epson, as well as IT-enabled service firms and call centers such as e-Telecare and People Support.

"We are exerting more effort in promoting our projects as we anticipate the continued growth of businesses in Cebu," Monera said. "For instance, Asia Town has at least 5 hectares of property that have yet to be developed."

Monera said the Ayala group had so far invested about P5 billion in Cebu through Cebu Holdings, where it has a 47-percent stake.

## Total holding off additional investments in LPG business

By Abigail L. Ho

WHILE KEEN ON BEEFING UP ITS LIQUEFIED petroleum gas business, Total (Philippines) Corp. is not likely to infuse additional investments in the sector unless illegal refilling and counterfeiting activities in the country are curbed.

In a briefing yesterday, Total managing director Anna Whitehouse said that while there was no directive from the oil firm's parent firm not to infuse more cash into its LPG business, the company was not keen on doing so at this time as it was suffering losses due to illegal activities.

"There's an issue on some groups using our cylinders. How can we invest if there's something like that happening? We need to control what's out there first before investing in new cylinders," she said.

"Until those issues are resolved, we'll have to hold off our investments to a minimum," she added.

She said the oil firm was now working with industry group Philippine Institute of Petroleum, of which oil majors Petron Corp. and Petronas Shell Petroleum Corp. were members, to come up with ways to curb counterfeiting and illegal refilling activities.

Total was fully supportive of the govern-

ment's efforts to eliminate such illegal activities in the sector, she added.

The energy, trade and local government departments have formed a multi-agency task force that will run after LPG dealers that engage in illegal and unsafe business practices.

Task Force LPG will curb, if not eliminate, the rampant use of under-filled, dilapidated, uncertified and unsafe LPG cylinders, which pose serious threats to public safety and security.

It will also clamp down on those doing illegal practices such as tampering, altering or modifying cylinders through changing the valve, and re-painting or re-labeling by any entity other than the legitimate owner of the cylinders.

According to data from the Department of Energy, out of the 1,175 LPG establishments that the DOE and Department of Trade and Industry inspected last year, as many as 896 or 76 percent were found to be selling unbranded and tampered cylinders, under-filled tanks, and defective tanks that had no safe weight, serial number and appropriate seals.

Without stating an exact amount, Whitehouse said Total suffered huge losses each year due to illegal activities in the LPG industry.

Total has invested about P50 million for the establishment of two LPG refilling stations in Taguig and Pasig.

## PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of April 24, 2006)

	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
<b>STOCKS</b>					
<b>FINANCIAL BANKS</b>					
Astoria Dev Bank Inc.	3.95	4.45	3.85	4.45	269,000
Bancomer Dev. Inc.	26	35.5	25	35.5	57,300
Bancomer Dev. Inc.	52	62	52	62	183,100
China Banking Corp.	800	800	800	800	3,210
China Dev Savings Bank	10	19	10	19.75	300
China Dev Savings Bank	54.49	60	54.48	54.48	1,340,000
China Dev Savings Bank	70.5	71.5	69.5	71.5	87,800
China Dev Savings Bank	33	33	32.5	32.5	752,700
China Dev Savings Bank	39.5	39.5	38	38	13,300
China Dev Savings Bank	34.5	34.5	34	34	900
China Dev Savings Bank	37.5	38	37.5	38	7,000
China Dev Savings Bank	14.25	14.75	14.25	14.75	7,500
China Dev Savings Bank	48.5	49	48.5	49	5,000
China Dev Savings Bank	39	39	38.5	38.5	5,800
China Dev Savings Bank	11	11	10.8	10.8	11,263,000
<b>OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS</b>					
Bankard Inc.	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	20,000
First Asia Dev Financial Corp.	28	28.5	28	28	45,200
First Asia Dev Financial Corp.	32.65	32.90	32.65	32.90	750
First Asia Dev Financial Corp.	190	90	85	85	120,900
First Asia Dev Financial Corp.	216.0	218.0	216.0	216.0	300
First Asia Dev Financial Corp.	11	11	10.8	10.8	11,263,000
<b>INDUSTRIAL</b>					
First Gen Corp.	45	45	44	44	867,200
First Ph. Dev. Corp.	11	13.25	11.13	13.25	140,800
First Ph. Dev. Corp.	15.2	15.5	14.95	15.5	35,200
First Ph. Dev. Corp.	8.4	8.4	8.3	8.4	1,265,300
First Ph. Dev. Corp.	4.35	4.4	4.35	4.35	16,992,200
First Ph. Dev. Corp.	0.21	0.2			

## JESUSA M. SERRANO

wife of the late **Gregorio Serrano**  
of Tabaco, Albay & Davao City

*Passed away in the Grace of our Lord  
on April 21, 2006 at the age of 85.*

Her loving children Gloria & Moises (†), Sis. Ave, Rudy & Salve, Ben & Lily, Ric & Paz, Ed & Yam; grandchildren Grace & Jey, Tettet & Jun, Dondon, Diday, Gohoy, Lira, Niño, Ching, Lui, Mike, Abby; great grandchildren Danini, Mico, Kenken, Kaykay request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at Cosmopolitan Memorial Chapel, Davao City.

Interment will be announced later.

## CONSTANTE V. VENTURA

*Died in the Grace of our Lord  
on April 23, 2006 at the age of 81.*

He is survived by his wife Sylvia Mendez Ventura; children Victor and Perla Sugay, Marisa and Hugo Diaz-Etcheverre, Cynthia and Barry Sugarman, Gina and Carlo Pablo, brother Angelo; sisters Linda Sherman, Lyra Ventura and Sr. Virginia Ventura; and 12 grandchildren.

His body lies in state at Sta. Rita Parish Church in Philamlife Homes, Quezon City. A Memorial service will be held at the Church on Wednesday, April 26, 2006 at 9:00 a.m. Cremation will follow.

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Valeriano G. Contreras	Chapel C-12a Quezon City	to be announced		Himtagay Pilipino
Purificacion C. Larioja	Chapel B-5, Q.C.		04/26/06 8:30 a.m.	Holy Cross Mem. Park

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burdened, and I will give  
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Matthew 11:28

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## Col. PEDRO REYES LAZO, M.D.

*Died in the Grace of the Lord on April 21, 2006  
at the age of 71, in Cagayan de Oro City.*

He is survived by his devoted wife Renee, siblings Fidelia (†), Felicidad (†), Corazon, Concepcion, Elias Jr. (†), Delfina, Baby and Arturo (†), beloved children Bong & Cecile, Jaja & Lime Viet & Tony, Chappy & Aimee, loving grandchildren Intoy, Issa, Nita, Bootske, Sofia, Mara, Joaquin and Baby Renee, nephews & nieces, family & friends.

His remains lie in state at Greenhills Memorial Home, Cagayan de Oro City.

Interment will be at Greenhills Memorial Park, Bulua, Cagayan de Oro City immediately after the 8:00 am Holy Mass at the Sacred Heart Church, RER Subd., Kauswagan, Cagayan de Oro City on Thursday, April 27, 2006.

## Message of Thanks

*To you alone, O LORD, to you alone, and not to us mortals be given because  
of your constant love and faithfulness." — Psalm 115:1*

## Retired Judge Martin Pedro E. Badong, Jr.

of Naga City

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We, the loving wife, OLIVE, children Peñafrancia "Penay" (†) and Rolle Sarte, Manuel Martin "Bong" Dave and Rocha Reyes, Lorenzo "Larry" and Veronica Claveria, and grandchildren Boondhona, Shawna, Frystinne, Isabel, Chyna, Chloe and Zoe, wish to convey our heartfelt gratitude to all of you who paid their last respect, offered material and financial support, masses and prayers, sent flowers, patiently kept vigil, comforted us, attended the funeral rites and in many immeasurable ways condoned with us in our most difficult times.

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Pag-IBIG's Quimbo inducted  
as PHILSSA president

THE PAG-IBIG FUND PRESIDENT AND CEO Romero Federico S. Quimbo urged the country's social security agencies to work harder together for better services and greater relevance during his induction as the new president of the Philippine Social Security Association (PHILSSA). PHILSSA is the umbrella organization composed of the Armed Forces of the Philippines - Retirement and Separation Benefits System (AF-RSSBS), Employees Compensation Commission (ECC), Government Service Insurance Corporation (GSIS), Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO), Philippine Health Insurance Commission (PhilHealth), Social Security System (SSS) and the Pag-IBIG Fund. Quimbo outlined his plans for what he called "the country's social security team" based on specific objectives.

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## How is leukemia diagnosed and treated?

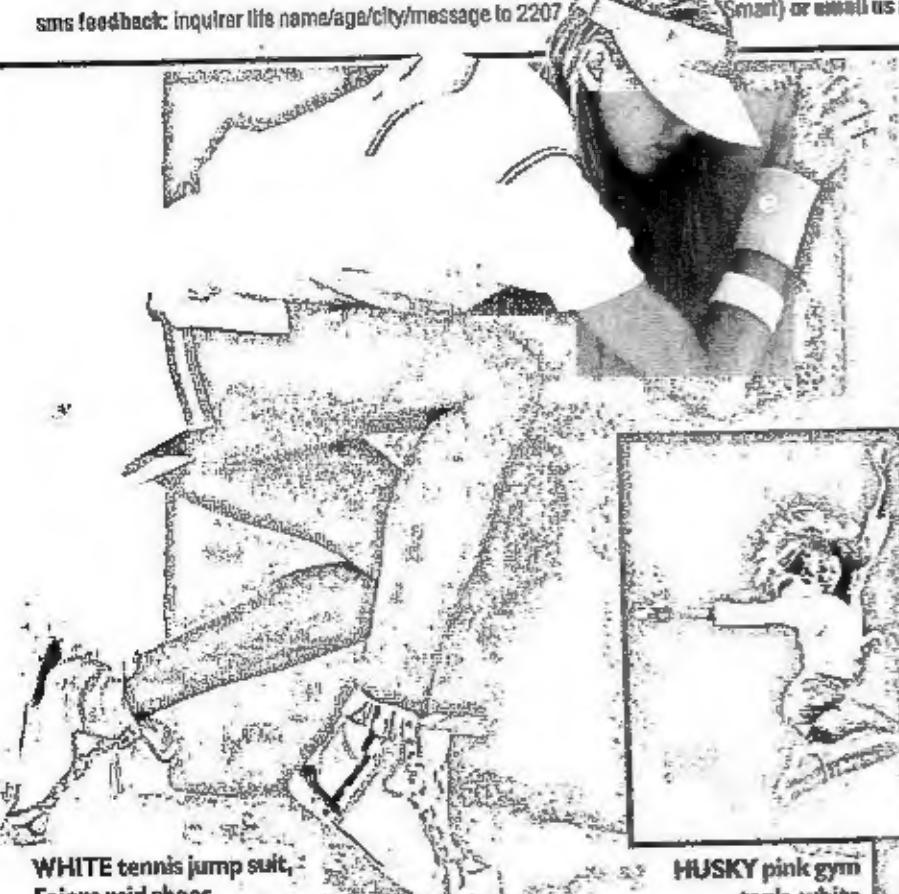
Leukemia is the 6th leading cause of death and the 7th leading cause of cancer in the Philippines, the most common form of malignancy in children comprising about 13%. Sixty percent (60%) of these are seen in less than 15 years of age. Leukemia can be acute or chronic. Acute lymphocytic leukemia being the most common and more seen in children while acute myelogenous leukemia is common in adults. Signs and symptoms of leukemia are nonspecific like pallor, fatigue, bleeding and hepatosplenomegaly. Patients can have recurrent infection and fever, joint pains or difficulty of breathing in relation to a mediastinal mass. Diagnosis is done morphologically via a peripheral blood smear or bone marrow biopsy. A bone marrow panel will help in the prognosis and treatment. Treatment is aggressive chemotherapy, and bone marrow transplant for high risk acute lymphocytic leukemia. Supportive care is necessary for control of infection, nutrition, pain and blood support. It is important to consult your doctor if you have anemia, bleeding, persistent infections or fever.

This week's answer to our feature question was provided by our medical service provider from Baguio City, Dr. Janice C. Reyes-Ignacio. Dr. Janice is one of her patients and colleagues to an Internist, a Hematologist and a medical Oncologist who finished her medical degree at UERBAMHIC. She took her specialty course for Internal Medicine at Baguio General Hospital Medical Center and obtained her sub-specialization training for Hematology and Transfusion Medicine in 1986. She went to Paris, France for her Transfusion Medicine Residency in 1990 and later completed her training for Medical Oncology in 1994. Dr. Ignacio is currently the president of the Philippine Society of Medical Oncology, a distinguished physician association for her work in voluntary blood donation and introducing component blood therapy by the Philippine National Red Cross and the DOH. She is also a board member and committee chair for RUV, IMAO, Philippine College of Physicians. She is married to Dr. Alfredo Ignacio and blessed with four boys. MEDICard members may visit her at St. Louis University of Sacred Heart School Hospital at Building Annex Room N1B13. Schedule to Fridays from 12nn to 2pm.

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to DE, Nicky or E-mail him at [inquiry@medicardphils.com](mailto:inquiry@medicardphils.com) for your inquiries on health matters.

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## Can Stella come out and play?

"I CAN'T WAIT TO GET you all out on the court!" said Stella McCartney. For years known as Beatle Paul McCartney's daughter, Stella has metamorphosed into a fabulous label as a fashion designer.

She said she had always wanted to do a tennis line. Lucky for her, Adidas came along. And now the sportswear company's spring/summer 2006 offerings are a grand slam collection of La Stella's running, gym, swim, training, warm-up and, of course, tennis wear. Not to mention sports shoes and accessories.

From snap tanks to tees and polos, from short shorts to short tights, from skirts to dresses, from crop jackets to coverups to jumpsuits—Adidas by Stella McCartney has a whole range of fashion choices for serious tennis belles. Also for runners, gym rats, swimmers and women who just feel most comfortable, and no less chic, in sportswear.

The colors of summer are in quite a competition in McCartney's collection: white, pale yellow and electricity (bright yellow); pale, light cypress, polar and court green; dusty rose and husky pink; calypso (burnt orange) and pop (neon red-orange).

Flip open an Adidas catalogue or hit over to an Adidas store and you will be sure to invite Paul McCartney's little girl over to play.

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DUNHILL'S rah-rah team: Smokey Delfino, with Ernest Buan and Carlo Zaldarriaga

## Awesome beach party away from the beach

**A** REFRESHING INFINITY POOL SURrounded by powdery beach sand, over 200 of Manille's fashionable faces and most sought-after party people, free-flowing bar, beautiful models in the latest summer luxe outfit and the country's top DJs all in one night, *palanggas*.

Well, dahlings, this perfection can be expected only from that luxury tobacco brand, Dunhill, which threw an awesome beach party to rival the best that Boracay, St. Tropez or Ibiza could offer. And it was held in a, take note, *palanggas*, sprawling mansion in the most exclusive of Makati addresses.

Perfection is what Dunhill gives us in all its events and activities. For this fab happening, the popular brand paid tribute to select individuals "whose dedication to perfection in all of their endeavors is reflected in everything that they do."

The breathtaking home of mega realtor Jacques Dupasquier was a fantastic manifestation of Dunhill's philosophy.

One of Manille's top developers and businessmen, Jacques' love for perfection in all of his endeavors is reflected in his own home. No less than those celebrated gals with beauty and brains, Anna Sy and the Almaria sisters, architect and interior designers, respectively, worked their masterful brilliance in several areas of the house.

A candle-lined red carpet welcomed us to the expansive pool/beach area. We were serenaded by the distinct musical vibe of guest DJ and top designer Rhett Eala.

The fun began early. Beautiful host Bianca Valerio got this special event rolling by introducing "the creative pillar of Dunhill's Dimensions." The opening number by a ballet troupe put a modern spin on a traditional dance that has been delighting the royal courts since the 16th century. It was the saperif for the scorching hot bikini fashion show of Loungeri Lux by multifaceted designer Celine Lopez; Minx by attractive Princess Sarte; Coconini by the trio of gorgeous lookers Linnet Aguirre, Amina Aranaz-Alunan and Mia Villavicencio; and USwim by young mover and shaker, eye-catching Hindy Tantoco.

The four hot, hot swimwear labels showcased the perfection of the ooh-la-la female form that provided the designers inspiration. The fantastic makeup on the drop-dead gorgeous models was done by another pillar of perfection, Shu Uemura. But who else, *palanggas*?

Popular DJ Manolet Dario brought his brand of perfection through rocking music for his set of three hot-hots, followed by hot young mega organizer, hip PR and super DJ GP

### WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen using Kodak EasyShare system



### Time-tested

The 10th anniversary celebration of Citibank Phils' Binondo branch at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in downtown Manille was a night for celebrating time-tested partnership and commitment to prosperity, *palanggas*.

More than 300 hot invitees attended the private affair that also marked the Chinese Year of the Fire Dog. The event not only recognized the bank's long and faithful partnership with the Filipino-Chinese community, it also ushered in, in style, another 12 months of prosperity for the CitiGold Wealth Management clients.

Citibank Philippines retail banking director Aileen Litonjua, together with marketing head Sari Pascual and Binondo branch manager Marion Kohchet-Chua, welcomed the guests.

In her speech, Aileen L. said, "It has been a privilege to serve your banking needs, assisting you in growing and managing your wealth for a secure financial future. Citibank Phils., in particular the Binondo branch, is where you can find the best service from our officers and staff."

Binondo, Manila, was Citibank Phils' original home when it first opened in the country back in 1902. Then known as International



KELEO'S Kenneth Chong, Rustan's Gigi Mabanta and Luzanne Manlapit, and Citibank Philippines' Aileen Litonjua

## Is déjà vu a form of epilepsy?

MANY WHO ARE SKEPTICAL ABOUT supernatural and paranormal things and who will not even bother to read on those subjects will suddenly reverse their opinion when they personally encounter something quite out of the ordinary. Some of these extraordinary experiences may be trivial, but others are of a profound nature.

Take the case of reader Sara Jane, a nurse from Bacolod. Since childhood, she had been experiencing a lot of psychic stuff. In high school, she noticed that people she quarreled with would get hurt or seriously ill.

### Unseen protectors

She seems to be protected by unseen creatures. Once, she started to cross the street then wanted to go back when she reached the middle. But she couldn't move her feet. Just then a speeding car passed her. Had she taken one step forward, she would have been run over.

When Sara was in college, she would visualize a particular guy and imagine him to be her boyfriend, the two of them going out on dates. Soon he would

indeed become her boyfriend. And this happened more than once.

Another strange experience she had: "As a kid, I accidentally broke the door knob. The lock was stuck. I didn't know what to do, worried that my mom would get mad at me when she learned what happened. I fell asleep and dreamed of a man's hand teaching me how to fix the door knob. When I woke up the next morning and saw the door knob, I remembered my dream very clearly. I did what my dream taught me. I simply pushed the button while turning the door knob and it was fixed."

In another dream, she was being taught by a guy how to use roller blades. She was then in the elementary. The guy told her how to maintain her balance by forming a V pattern. When she used roller blades for the first time, her friends were amazed that she knew what to do.

"I thought I was just a fast learner," she said. The same thing happened when she enrolled in karatedo (a form of martial arts). The instructor was surprised at how fast she learned com-

### INNER AWARENESS

Jaimie T. Licauco

pared with others who had been studying longer than her.

She wanted to know how to harness or develop her psychic powers to help other people better. She also wanted my explanation for déjà vu because, according to her, medical science explained it as a form of epilepsy connected to a disturbance in the temporal lobe of the brain. "Do you have another explanation?"

### Already seen

Let me answer this last question first. I don't agree that déjà vu is a form of epilepsy or hallucination, as some people claim. For me, déjà vu or "already seen" is caused by any of the following: A person dreams of a future event but



soon forgets it. When s/he is in the actual situation s/he saw in his/her dream, s/he would recall that s/he had already seen the situation/event because it had been registered in his/her nervous system. Or s/he might have had a spontaneous precognitive or prophetic vision, but forgot it.

When s/he is in the actual situation, s/he remembers having experienced or seen the event before, because s/he dreamed it.

Déjà vu could also be due to a memory of an event in a past life. A person may go to an old cathedral or building that s/he had been to in a past life. The visit triggers his/her soul memory to remember the place. This has actually happened to several people I know, and even to me. When I was in France and Egypt, I felt I had been in those countries before. I saw things familiar to me although I'd never seen them before in this life.

Sara's childhood and college experiences show she has invisible spirit protectors or guides that protect her from physical harm and from her enemies. It

is they who hurt or retaliate against her enemies. She is able to get what she wants through visualization because she has a strong mind.

She's really a psychic. Her psychic abilities manifest both in the waking state as well as in the dream state. She is able to psychically communicate with others, without her knowing it. Because her rational mind is very strong, being in a medical profession, she has to suppress her intuitive and imaginative nature most of the time.

If she learns how to control, develop and manage her psychic gifts, she can use them for psychic or intuitive diagnosis of illness, healing and counseling. She will be able to help her patients much more than any other nurse whose third eye is not open.

Sara should read more books on the subject and attend professionally run seminars so she can be guided properly toward a safe development of her inner faculties. If interested, she can inquire at 8107245 or 8926806 about inner mind development courses and other services.



MOI with Tina Tinio, Jenni Epperson, DJ Montana, JM Rodriguez and Cat Arambulo



PRETTY Chico Suarez, Embassy's main man Eric Cua and fun Michelle Pamintuan



CENTURY Properties' Jigger Antonio and ladylove May Muñoz



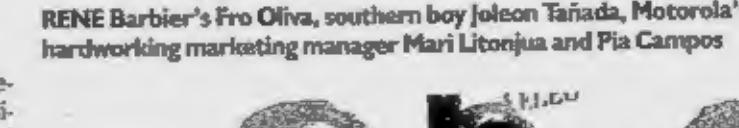
DESIGNERS Mia Villavicencio, Amina Aranaz-Alunan and Linnet Aguirre



LOUIE Ysmael with designer Celine Lopez



KING and beautiful model Joey Mead, with L'Oréal's Leica Carpo and Atom Henares



RENE Barbier's Fro Oliva, southern boy Joleon Tanada, Motorola's hardworking marketing manager Mari Litonjua and Pia Campos



LOLITA Ty and Kerwin Chua



SARI Pascual and feng shui artist Lizanne Uychaco



CIRIACO and Erlinda Lapid



VICKY Yu and vivacious Marion Kohchet-Chua



DR. LUCIANO Ong and wife Helen, Hans and Kenneth Chong, Melle Romero A. and husband Louie Ablaza

## LIFESTYLE

C 3



NBA star and Asian icon Yao Ming takes the Gatorade sweat test at the Gatorade Sports Science Institute (GSSI).



ACTIVE people like Yao Ming get suggestions from GSSI scientists on how to prevent cramping and heat illnesses as well as how to optimize performance. GSSI warns about the dangers of dehydration and fluid loss during sports and strenuous activity.



NBA star Vince Carter is one of world-class athletes who underwent GSSI's sweat analysis and hydration assessment.

## Go ahead, sweat it out

FILIPINO ATHLETES WILL UNDERGO this month the Gatorade sweat test to help enhance their performance and well-being.

The Gatorade Sports Science Institute (GSSI) has conducted almost two decades of "sweat tests" on numerous professional and amateur athletes from all over the world. The sweat test helps teach active people about the dangers of dehydration and fluid loss during sports and strenuous activity.

The tests establish the need to restore fluids the body loses through perspira-

tion as a result of strenuous activities. Gatorade helps restore lost body fluids.

Test participants for the Philippine test include members of the Alaska Aces and the Far Eastern University Tamaraws, current champions of the University Athletic Association of the Phils.

GSSI head and senior scientist Dr. Xiaochi Shi and Dr. George Canlas, Philippine representative in the Gatorade Asia advisory board, will supervise the activity.

GSSI is the world's largest privately funded sports science research facility. It focuses on helping athletes optimize

their health and performance through research and education in hydration and nutrition science.

This is the second time the GSSI sweat test will be done in the Philippines.

Some world-class sports figures who have taken part in GSSI's tests are ironman Chris Leigh; basketball superstars Yao Ming and Vince Carter; New York Yankees baseball star Derek Jeter; the Miami Dolphins; the New York Giants; and European soccer teams Real Madrid, Juventus, and Manchester United.

The GSSI sweat test consists of sweat

analysis and hydration assessment. Sweat samples are collected from individual athletes to determine the concentration of electrolytes (sodium and potassium) lost through sweat.

The athlete is weighed before and after training to measure fluid-loss. Urine

samples are also collected before exercise to measure how hydrated the athlete's are before starting exercise. The results allow GSSI scientists to make recommendations on how to prevent cramping and heat stroke and to optimize performance.

## 15 BLSS challengers named

FIFTEEN PEOPLE, RANGING in age from 19 to 64, are ready to challenge the Bert Lozada Swim School (BLSS) and its instructors to cure them of their fear of water.

"They are the winners of the recent BLSS and Philippine Daily Inquirer Lifestyle promo 'Help Me Conquer My Fear.'

Each winner will get free swimming lessons under the BLSS Confidence Booster Program and free swimsuit and gear from Speedo.

They will begin their month-long

swimming classes next month. Exact dates and venues will be determined by BLSS.

They may claim their prizes from the INQUIRER Marketing Department (tel. 8978808 loc. 259 or 263) until May 5. Please bring a valid ID.

The winners are:

Zenaida A. Braga, 64, a resident of Quezon City who works as a secretary in a private company in Makati City;

Racquel D. Concepcion, '35,

Caloocan City and an employee of the Bureau of Immigration;

Renato dela Cruz, 37, a resident of Las Piñas City who works in Makati City;

Ida Doctor Elope, 44, a resident of Valenzuela City who is an event organizer/cultural worker;

Maria Rhodella S. Flores, 34, a resident of Pasay City and a Senate employee;

Ma. Gisela M. Galang, 37, a resident of Quezon City who holds office in

Manila as a nonlife insurance executive;

Pacita Gelido, 43, a resident of Quezon City who works in Pasig City;

Evangeline Ignacio, 43, a resident of Mandaluyong City who works as a financial consultant/agent for an insurance company in Makati City and a balloon decorator;

Maribe A. Jocson, 43, a physician who lives in Antipolo City;

Ana Victoria R. Joren, 22, originally from Tacloban City who works at the Institute of Chemistry of the University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City;

Cleo Roda C. Nodado, 35, a resident

of Quezon City who works as a product manager in Makati City;

Mark Anthony A. Pasco, 19, a resident of Mandaluyong City and student of Polytechnic University of the Philippines;

Maria Lerma Taña Portento, 25, a resident of Manila and an employee of a government office in Quezon City;

Angel Santillan Rivera, 39, a resident of Caloocan City and an employee of the Department of Agrarian Reform in Quezon City;

Elmer J. Tan, 55, a self-employed certified public accountant who lives in Marikina City.



ENRIQUE Zobel Cup winners

## Keeping time at the games

SPORTS WATCH TIMEX TOOK TO THE fields at the high-energy, high-powered Enrique Zobel Memorial Polo Cup as the official timekeeper. The Enrique Zobel Cup, which was officially presented by leading dress shirt brand Van Heusen, was launched by Zobel's family to celebrate the visionary businessman's life-long affair with horses and polo.

Even as a young child, Zobel—or EZ—was already riding horses with his father Don Jacobo Zobel. At age 10, he supervised the care and feeding of his family's ponies; at age 12 he was on the roster of players at the Manila Polo Club. EZ has played on polo fields around the world, bringing home prestige and countless trophies—such as the most prized King of Spain's Cup, which he won three years in a row. Beyond the game, EZ has practiced "polo diplomacy," bring together rulers or previously unfriendly Asian nations.

Aside from keeping time, Timex also provided the prizes for the winning teams of the Low Goal and High Goal Match. The Blue Team, comprised of Mark Agustin, Ifigo Zobel, David Stirling and Mark Field won the High Goal Match; while Antonio Veloso, Dondi Santos, Jerome Hernandez and Gusi Aguirre of the White Team walked home as win-



LUCKY Warner Manning won a Timex.

ners of the Low Goal Match.

During the breaks in the game—in between chukkers, in polo parlance—Timex also gave away Timex watches to three lucky guests, including Warner Manning, HSBC president and CEO-Philippines and Eduardo G. Vaca, director of Investments Financial Advisor Global Private Client, Merrill Lynch International Bank Ltd.

Known for the Ironman Triathlon, the



KUMIKO Kuroda, Dee Zobel and Renee Speltz



granddaddy of all performance sports watches, Timex continues to innovate and strives to fulfill its commitment of "making more out of time."

TIMEX provided prizes for some matches.

Jerome Polancos, a member of Kagabaya's board of directors and a treatment partner, says it takes six to eight months of treatment to treat TB, with patients not missing a single day of medication.

## Young light bearers of Parola

IN PAROLA, TONDO, A NEW GENERATION of leaders are helping a community wage war against poverty and neglect.

Calling themselves Kababang Gabay ng Bayan (Kagabaya), they regularly visit Lolita Bawic, 63, and more than 100 other people.

Kagabaya met Bawic when it was going from door to door to register tuberculosis (TB) cases in the community. It did not occur to Bawic that her coughs, fever, weakness and lack of appetite were symptoms of TB, an infectious disease that could be deadly if ignored.

Kagabaya members brought Bawic to the Fugoso Health Center, where she tested positive for TB. Doctors put her on a strict medical regimen, including a daily cocktail of antibiotics. They stressed the need not to miss a single day of medication, as this would undo positive results and may even worsen the disease.

To make sure she stuck to the program, a Kagabaya member collected from the hospital the supply of medicines for one week and gave Bawic her daily dose.

After six months, she and 80 other Kagabaya "patients" are better.

### Accomplished

The success of the TB eradication program, "Kl Akibol" ("Kagabaya... Aksyon TB Out!"), made Kagabaya one of the Ten Accomplished Youth Organizations (Tayo) in 2005.

The award is managed by Tayo Foundation, the National Youth Commission and KilosKo, with assistance from Coca-Cola Foundation Phils. Inc. It recognizes, rewards and encourages youth organizations with projects that help build their communities.

Kagabaya converted its tambayan, the multi-purpose hall of Barangay 20 in Tondo, into a TB treatment facility.

Kl Akibol builds on the government's National TB Program that uses the directly observed treatment short course (DOTS) method, a comprehensive strategy endorsed by the World Health Organization and the International Union against Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases for detection and treatment. The strategy allows government health centers and hospitals to provide free diagnosis and medication to patients, provided a trained TB partner closely monitors them.

Jerome Polancos, a member of Kagabaya's board of directors and a treatment partner, says it takes six to eight months of treatment to treat TB, with patients not missing a single day of medication.



TONDO'S NEW FACE. Members of Kagabaya bravely help a community wage war against poverty and neglect.

If health practitioners are to ensure that patients are taking their medicines regularly, they have to administer them themselves. This means patients will have to spend P40 a day to travel from Parola to the Fugoso Health Center and back.

As a result, the rate of non-compliance is high. Alfred Elmido, chair of Kagabaya, says, "Imbes na manasaha sila, pambili na lang nila ng bigas o ng ulam yung pera nila."

### Focused

In 2004, Kagabaya launched Kl Akibol and started "Tutok Gamutan," completing the National TB program. Treatment partners bring the medicines to patients and make sure they take them, ensuring a high compliance and cure rate.

Out of Kagabaya's 115 members, 25 are certified treatment partners, each caring for up to 24 TB patients.

Kagabaya also conducts seminars on TB twice a month to make people aware of TB's cause, symptoms and treatment.

### Support

With its Tayo award, Kagabaya has been getting a lot of support from various multi-sectoral groups allowing the extension of Kl Akibol after the end of the contract between the United States Agency for International Development and the nongovernmental Philippine Business for Social Progress.

Members sometimes use their own money and hold simple fundraising activities. They also join contests and use the prize money for the project.

Kagabaya wants to make the program permanent. Says Elmido, "Gusto talaga naming ituloy (long) project na ita. At gusto pa namin siyang palakihin."

# Calories may play hide-and-seek

If you have been honestly and sincerely watching what you eat but are unable to achieve significant weight loss, there may be some calories in your diet that are playing hide-and-seek with you.

Unnecessary calories can lurk in many seemingly innocent foods. For example, you may think that soda crackers are low in calories. Think again. Some crackers in the market contain 40 calories apiece. Ten crackers will set you back 400 calories.

## Diet food

It is easy to eat more than you should if you believe that low-fat, low-carb, or low-sugar food is equivalent to zero calories. Overeating can also happen if the food is bland and tasteless.

Take reduced calorie syrup, for instance. "Light" syrup has 100 calories per one-fourth cup while regular syrup has 200 calories. But many people don't find the light syrup sweet enough so they use double the amount. They may think they are saving calories when they are not.

## Nibbling

I once knew someone who never ate a full meal because she was convinced that feeling full after a meal meant she ate too

much and would get fat. So she nibbled her way through the day on "lightweight" things like dry cereal. She thought she was eating very little but all those nibbles added up to a lot of calories.

Another person I knew was very careful about what she ate at regular meals. She didn't take into account the nibbles when she cooked or baked for her family. After she realized her "taste tests" were ruining her figure, she was able to lose weight.

## Liquid calories

Most people know better than to guzzle a liter or two of soft drinks if they are trying to lose weight. But some don't realize that excessive amounts of packaged iced teas, sports drinks and juices will also pack in the calories.

Specialty coffee mixtures can be calorie-traps because of whole milk, cream or flavored syrups. Ordinary brewed coffee can be full of excess calories if you load it up with creamers (nondairy or the real thing).

A client once wondered what made her gain a couple of pounds in a few weeks when "nothing much had changed" in her daily diet. What hap-

## WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan



pened was she had gone a little crazy over a liquid flavored creamer, pouring it generously into her several cups of coffee daily. She regained her usual weight when she ended her love affair with the

## Salads

Salad greens and other vegetables are low in calories but the oil or mayonnaise used for the dressing is not. Many people force themselves to eat "only" a salad for lunch thinking they are saving calories when, for the same amount of calories or even less, their stomachs and taste buds would be much happier with more substantial food.

## Cooking oil

The first time someone said to me "but I thought food fried in XYZ cooking oil is not fattening," I thought it was a fluke.

But I have heard the same statement repeatedly. There is a misconception that heart-healthy oil like canola or olive is less fattening than not-so-healthy oil like hydrogenated cooking oil. It is wise to remember that all oils have basically the same amount of calories—about 120 per tablespoon.

## Cholesterol-free

"No cholesterol" does not mean no calories or very few calories. It simply means the food contains no cholesterol. Whether the food is fattening or not depends on how many calories it has per serving and how many servings you eat.

## Alcohol

I don't know if it is wishful thinking, but some people believe alcoholic drinks have no calories. I have seen the shocked look on their faces when they start calculating how many calories they are actually drinking on their weekly "night on the town."

After doing some mental arithmetic about his favorite drink, one young man said, in a hushed voice, "That's 1,000 calories!" I did my own math and figured he was either having 10 single shots of tequila or five double shots (about 100-

120 calories a shot). Either way, it was a lot of calories. And it did not include calories from the pulutan or pica-pica that accompanied the drinks.

## Sauces

Many calories hide in the sauce of casserole dishes. If the sauce is cream- or butter-based, it contains hidden calories. If the sauce or gravy is made from the drippings of meat, pork or chicken, you can be sure there are unnecessary calories with every tablespoon you ladle onto your food.

## Healthy but hefty

Except for vegetables, overly large portions of food will definitely hinder your weight-loss progress because you get more calories than you need. I put on 50 pounds with my second baby. I was eating healthy food but enough to feed triplets.

Some people make good nutritional choices but they just go a little wide on the number and size of servings.

If you want to lose weight, remember it isn't just what you eat but also how much you eat that is important.

Visit [www.tinajuanfitness.info](http://www.tinajuanfitness.info)

## EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

### Straight arm shoulder extension with rubberband



FIRMS AND TIGHTENS muscles at the back of the shoulders (rear deltoids) and at the sides of the upper back (latissimus dorsi)

#### Equipment:

Exercise mat and rubber band

#### Exercise technique:

1. Sit down on the mat with knees bent, feet flexed and rubber band hooked around the arches of your feet.

2. Keep your straight arms wider than shoulder width with palms facing backward and knuckles facing

downward.

3. Pull the rubber band backward a few inches by bringing your shoulder blades together.

4. Slowly return to starting position.

5. Do the desired number of repetitions.

#### Performance tips:

1. Initiate the movement by squeezing your shoulder blades together rather than just pulling on the rubber band with your hands. You should feel the muscles contracting in the sides of your upper back.

2. The movement in this exercise

is subtle. Don't expect to move your arms backward with a large range of motion.

3. Pay special attention to the positioning of your hands and wrists. Keep your knuckles facing the mat so that your wrist stays in a straight alignment with your forearm. If your wrist bends as you do the exercise, you will place unnecessary stress on your wrist joint.

4. Watch that you don't lean forward with your head as you pull backward with the rubber band.

Repetitions:  
Do 10-12 repetitions.

SOME ANCIENT BELIEFS SPOKE OF A mythical kingdom where men and women lived in near-perfect coexistence, where virtues like honesty, love and peace were highly regarded, and agelessness and optimum health were gifts from heaven.

A popular Tibetan legend is about a place, a remote, secret valley in the Himalayas. A 19th-century Buddhist teacher named Mipham wrote the Great Commentary on the Kalacakra containing directions to this paradise.

It was supposed to be across the river Sita in a land divided by eight mountain ranges. In this mythical land, Shambhala was a palace where Rigden kings lived in a dimension beyond time, ready to return to Earth to save humanity.

#### Getting there

Some say the tale is not to be taken literally but metaphorically. Others claim society has become enlightened and, having reached pure spiritual state, entered a celestial world.

But there are those who think it is completely mythical. Whatever the truth is, the stories are deeply rooted in the human desire to find a better place.

#### Path

Whether fact or fiction, this kingdom exists. For it is a pathway to warrior-ship. The word warrior comes from the Tibetan word *powa*, one who is brave. Warrior-ship is the art of bravery.

The tradition of warrior-ship can be found in North and South American Indians, in Japanese samurai, in the legendary King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, in great biblical rulers like King David.

To achieve enlightened warrior-ship, not based on violence but on peace, here is a guideline for the contemporary warrior from the book "Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior" by Chogyam Trungpa:

• Do not be afraid of yourself—you have great force within you. Even in the face of great problems, you can still be heroic. If you allow fear to overcome you, selfishness sets in.

• Discover the basic goodness of life—look and see. Appreciate simple experiences. Connect with your world and awaken this goodness in you.

• Surrender to goodness—hear and touch. Allow goodness to flow into and through you, so that you become its vehicle (a helping hand, a comforting hug, listening ear).

• Harmonize mind and body—when there is unity of mind with body, there is gentleness. This leads to fearlessness—being able to respond to life with the vision of trust. Meditate. Pray. Seek moments of silence.

• Uplift yourself—you need not be overwhelmed by duties to fulfill expectations to be met. Because you know things are as they are now, you accept your situation with grace.

• Celebrate life's journey—make a personal discovery of life. Do the things that can make you feel whole and complete. Find your corner of peace inside you so that you can connect this with the world outside.

#### Graces

In a highly stressful world where one can feel out of balance, there is an inherent need to find equilibrium. Often, the easiest way to keep in

## INSIDE OUT



Cory Quirino

sync is to go out of town.

In the spirit of Tibetan grace, there is a place of genuine serenity aptly called Chi (for energy) at the Shangri-La Mactan Island Resort and Spa. It is more than a sincere attempt to recreate a palace, perhaps similar to what the idyllic Shambhala might have been. You should start your journey to connect with your basic goodness here.

A garden path leads to a quaintly regal entrance. You are greeted by an oasis of wood, water and light. The sound of softly cascading pools immediately calms you while an exquisitely sculpted chandelier bathes you in an amber glow.

The senses await awakening, energies expect reviving with a menu of spa pleasures based on Eastern healing arts. One gets a short questionnaire as a cold towel and cup of soothing tea is served.

From your answers, special aromatherapy oils will be chosen according to your natural element—earth, water, fire, metal and wood.

Spa treatments include the standards like Thai, Swedish and hot.

Aromavitality—two hours of gentle soothing massage, a combination of Swedish, Shiatsu and reflexology using aromatic oils to balance body rhythms.

Chi Balance—two hours acupressure and massage to build and move energy within the body using oriental herbs and oils.

Himalayan Healing Stones—two hours of healing with the use of warm stones on your body to relieve stressful muscles and remove aches and soreness.

Water Shiatsu—2 1/2 hours of unique water massage and mind-body therapy in a heated pool to relax a stiff body and reduce tension, making some satisfied customers feel "reborn."

You can choose from 15 villas and garden suites for couples, singles or families. Every door has a Tibetan name like *baskul* for the beginning; *calra*, wheel of life; *gomba*, solitude.

You wear the luxurious cashmere robes and slippers. And, in the hands of expert masseurs and masseuses, you surrender to another dimension, one ruled by rose, cardamom, vetiver, lavender, ylang-ylang, chamomile.

With the power of touch, you are transported to the land of dreams.

When you wake up, your appetites are stimulated. Awaiting you is Chi's spa cuisine, pleasing the palate with light, nutritious, delicate grilled tuna, bowls of salads, ginger-spiced carrot soups and much more.

#### Sparty

Life need not be just a party. Why not make it a "sparty"? Indulging in healing pleasures is a better and safer way to celebrate.

Love and light!

Special thanks to Peggy Angeles, Timothy Wright and Sharon Samarista of Shangri-La Mactan

THAT FLAT SCREEN TV YOUR FAMILY HAS BEEN DREAMING ABOUT JUST WENT ON SALE. DO YOU HAVE CASH2GO?

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